



STATEMENT ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF SEASONAL INFLUENZA VACCINES IN 2020

It is important to read this statement in conjunction with The Australian Immunisation Handbook available at immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au.

Overview of key points and updates for 2020

- Annual vaccination is the most important measure to prevent influenza and its complications.
- Annual influenza vaccination is recommended for all people ≥ 6 months of age.
- All vaccines available in 2020 are quadrivalent influenza vaccines (QIVs).
- All children aged 6 months to less than 5 years are now eligible to receive free annual influenza vaccines under the National Immunisation Program (NIP).
- The dose of influenza vaccines for all ages is 0.5mL. The 0.25mL dose for young children is no longer available.
- For adults aged ≥ 65 years the adjuvanted QIV, Flud[®] Quad, is preferentially recommended over standard QIVs.

Table 1. Seasonal influenza vaccines registered and available for use in Australia in 2020, by age

Vaccine	FluQuadri 0.50 mL (Sanofi)	Vaxigrip Tetra 0.50 mL (Sanofi)	Fluarix Tetra 0.50 mL (GSK)	Afluria Quad 0.50 mL (Seqirus)	Influvac Tetra 0.50 mL (Mylan)	Flud Quad 0.50 mL (Seqirus)
Registered age group						
6 to 35 months (<3 years)	✓	✓	✓*	x	x	x
≥ 3 to <5 years	✓	✓	✓*	x	✓	x
≥ 5 to <65 years	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓	x
≥ 65 years	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓†

Ticks indicate age at which a vaccine is registered and available. Shaded boxes represent funding under the NIP.

* Funding only for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, pregnant women and people who have certain medical conditions.

† Adjuvanted QIV preferred over standard QIVs.

Influenza virus strains included in the 2020 southern hemisphere seasonal influenza vaccines:

- A (H1N1): [an A/Brisbane/02/2018 \(H1N1\)pdm09-like virus](#);
- A (H3N2): [an A/South Australia/34/2019 \(H3N2\)-like virus](#);
- B: [a B/Washington/02/2019-like \(B/Victoria lineage\) virus](#);
- B: [a B/Phuket/3073/2013-like \(B/Yamagata lineage\) virus](#).

Highlights for 2020 influenza vaccine formulations

- Vaxigrip Tetra[®] is a QIV, newly registered for use in adults and children from 6 months of age.
- Flud[®] Quad is an adjuvanted QIV, newly registered for use in adults ≥ 65 years of age.
- FluQuadri[®] is a QIV, previously registered for adults and children from 3 years of age. The age indication for this vaccine has now been extended to include children from 6 months of age. The FluQuadri Junior formulation is no longer available.

- Influvac Tetra® is a QIV, previously registered for adults from 18 years of age. The age indication for this vaccine has now been extended to include children from 3 years of age.

Timing of vaccination

- Annual vaccination should occur before the onset of each influenza season. The period of peak influenza circulation is typically June to September in most parts of Australia.
- While protection is generally expected to last for the whole season, optimal protection against influenza occurs within the first 3 to 4 months following vaccination.
- Vaccination should continue to be offered as long as influenza viruses are circulating and a valid vaccine (before expiration date) is available. Some vaccine brands now have an expiry date of February 2021.
- Revaccination later in the same year is not routinely recommended, but may benefit some individuals due to personal circumstances, such as travel or pregnancy.

Influenza vaccination for pregnant women

- Influenza vaccine is recommended in every pregnancy and at any stage of pregnancy.
- Influenza vaccine can safely be given at the same time as pertussis vaccine.
- For women who received an influenza vaccine in 2019, revaccinate if the 2020 influenza vaccine becomes available before the end of pregnancy.
- For women who receive an influenza vaccine before becoming pregnant, revaccinate during pregnancy to protect the unborn infant.

Eligibility for influenza vaccines funded by the National Immunisation Program (NIP)

- Annual influenza vaccination is recommended and NIP-funded for all children 6 months to <5 years and all adults ≥65 years. It is also recommended for all people 5 to <65 years of age, but only NIP-funded in specific populations in this age group due to their increased risk of complications from influenza. These populations include:
 - *All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;*
 - *People who have certain medical conditions which increase the risk of influenza disease complications (refer to Table 2);*
 - *Pregnant women (during any stage of pregnancy).*

Table 2. Medical conditions associated with an increased risk of influenza disease complications and for which individuals are eligible for free vaccination under the NIP*

Category	Vaccination strongly recommended for individuals with the following conditions
Cardiac disease	Cyanotic congenital heart disease, congestive heart failure, coronary artery disease
Chronic respiratory conditions	Severe asthma, cystic fibrosis, bronchiectasis, suppurative lung disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, chronic emphysema
Chronic neurological conditions	Hereditary and degenerative CNS diseases, seizure disorders, spinal cord injuries, neuromuscular disorders
Immunocompromising conditions	Immunocompromised due to disease or treatment, asplenia or splenic dysfunction, HIV infection
Diabetes and other metabolic disorders	Type 1 or 2 diabetes, chronic metabolic disorders
Renal disease	Chronic renal failure
Haematological disorders	Haemoglobinopathies
Long-term aspirin therapy in children aged 6 months to 10 years	These children are at increased risk of Reye syndrome following influenza infection

* Please refer to The Australian Immunisation Handbook available at immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au for advice on persons who are strongly recommended to receive annual influenza vaccination but not eligible for NIP-funded influenza vaccines.