

Immunisation Provider Information Resource

2021 Influenza Program

‘What you need to know’

Now is the time for immunisation providers to consider their options for administering the influenza vaccine effectively and in a safe setting for staff and the community.

Immunisation delivery is an essential service and should continue during the COVID-19 pandemic. See the [Maintaining immunisation services during COVID-19 fact sheet \(PDF 164KB\)](#) and [COVID-19 – frequently asked questions](#) for further information.

To help structure and manage the 2021 Influenza Program, and assist and support with program implementation, please refer to the following information about 2021 influenza vaccines, timing of vaccination, eligibility, reporting to the AIR, and vaccine availability, ordering and storage.

Vaccines

The annual composition of influenza vaccines for the Southern Hemisphere is reviewed in September each year by the World Health Organization (WHO), and subsequently by the Australian Influenza Vaccine Committee (AIVC).

All funded influenza vaccines in the 2021 program are quadrivalent vaccines (QIV) and contain viruses for two influenza A and two influenza B strains.

The quadrivalent vaccines in 2021 contain the following strains:

- > an A/Victoria/2570/2019 (H1N1) pdm09-like virus;
- > an A/Hong Kong/2671/2019 (H3N2)-like virus;
- > a B/Washington/02/2019-like (B/Victoria lineage) virus; and
- > a B/Phuket/3073/2013-like (B/Yamagata lineage) virus.

The funded influenza vaccines in 2021 will be:

- > Vaxigrip Tetra® 0.5ml for those aged 6 months and older
- > Fluarix®Tetra 0.5ml for those aged 6 months and older
- > FluQuadri™ 0.5ml for those aged 6 months and older
- > Afluria®Quad 0.5ml for those aged 5 years and older
- > Fluad®Quad 0.5ml for those aged 65 years and older.

Providers must be aware of the age cohorts and eligibility criteria for all influenza vaccines and ensure they administer age appropriate funded vaccine only to individuals eligible under the relevant funded Influenza Program.



Timing of vaccination

Influenza vaccination is recommended to commence from April, aiming to achieve an optimum level of protection during the peak influenza season, typically June to September for most parts of Australia.

However, influenza case notifications occur throughout the year in South Australia and vaccination should continue to be offered to eligible individuals as long as the vaccine is available.

Revaccination later in the same season is not routinely recommended for individuals who have already received a 2021 influenza vaccine.

ATAGI Advice on the relative [timing of administering influenza and COVID-19 vaccines in 2021](#) provides the most up to date advice on the recommended interval between an influenza vaccine and a COVID-19 vaccine.

Eligible cohorts for the nationally funded influenza program

Annual influenza vaccination is recommended for all people 6 months of age or older to reduce their chances of becoming ill with influenza.

Funded influenza vaccine should be given only to those in the eligible cohorts listed below due to their increased risk of complications from influenza.

Pregnant women

All pregnant women are eligible to receive the age appropriate funded influenza vaccine.

Recommendations for vaccination:

- > If a woman has received a 2020 influenza vaccine in her current pregnancy it is recommended to administer a 2021 influenza vaccine.
- > If a woman has received a 2021 influenza vaccine before becoming pregnant it is recommended to administer another 2021 influenza vaccine during pregnancy to protect the unborn child.
- > If a woman has received a 2021 influenza vaccine during pregnancy there is no recommendation to revaccinate with another 2021 vaccine in the same pregnancy.

Ensure that the vaccine is recorded on the woman's antenatal card as well as the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from 6 months of age are eligible to receive the funded age appropriate influenza vaccine.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children 6 months to less than 9 years of age should have two doses at least four weeks apart in the first year they receive influenza vaccine.

Only one annual dose is required thereafter for those who have received at least one influenza vaccine in a previous influenza season.

Children 6 months to less than 5 years

All children from 6 months to less than 5 years of age are eligible to receive the funded age appropriate influenza vaccine.

Children aged 6 months to less than 9 years should have two doses at least four weeks apart in the first year they receive influenza vaccine.

Only one annual dose is required thereafter for those who have received at least one influenza vaccine in a previous influenza season.

People aged 65 years and older

All people aged 65 years and older are eligible to receive the funded influenza vaccine.

The Flud@Quad quadrivalent adjuvanted vaccine is funded and recommended for those aged 65 years and older. This vaccine has been specifically designed to boost the immune response and provide better protection for this age group.

Medically at risk patients

Individuals from 6 months of age with medical risk factors associated with an increased risk of influenza complications are eligible to receive funded influenza vaccine.

Family members and contacts of those with medical at risk factors are recommended to have influenza vaccine but are not funded to do so.

To ensure that all people with eligible medical at risk factors are offered funded influenza vaccine, refer to the list of medical at risk factors on the:

- > [Annual Funded Influenza Program, 2021 South Australia Schedule](#)

Further information about 2021 influenza vaccine recommendations, medical at risk criteria and the National Immunisation Program (NIP) can be found in the:

- > [Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation \(ATAGI\) Statement on the Administration of Seasonal Influenza Vaccines in 2021](#)
- > Australian Government Department of Health; health.gov.au/immunisation
- > Australian Immunisation Handbook (online), [Influenza chapter](#)

South Australian state government funded influenza program

People who are experiencing homelessness

In addition to the nationally funded influenza program, state funded influenza vaccines are available in 2021 to people who are experiencing homelessness if they are not in the eligible cohorts listed above.

The definition of homelessness for this program includes adults and children living in:

- > improvised dwellings, tents, or sleeping rough;
- > supported accommodation for the homeless;
- > boarding houses or other temporary lodging; or
- > severely crowded dwellings.

It is recognised that many people who are experiencing homelessness will be eligible for funded influenza vaccine under the nationally funded influenza program and if so, should receive an age appropriate nationally funded influenza vaccine.

Influenza vaccines and egg allergic individuals

- > Egg allergy, even anaphylaxis, is not a contraindication to influenza vaccine.
- > Egg allergic individuals can receive a full dose of age appropriate influenza vaccine.

- > Vaccination does not need to occur in a hospital setting.

Before vaccinating egg allergic individuals, providers should refer to the information and recommendations regarding influenza vaccination for egg allergic individuals at:

- > Australian Government Department of Health: health.gov.au/immunisation
- > ASCIA Guidelines – [Vaccination of the egg-allergic individual](#)

Reporting of influenza vaccines to the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR)

The AIR is a whole-of-life register and accepts reports of vaccinations administered to people of all ages. As of 1 March 2021, it is mandatory for providers to report all administered influenza vaccines to the AIR.

Timely and accurate recording of all administered vaccines to the AIR enables information to be obtained on vaccine uptake and helps prevent program errors.

Influenza vaccines should be recorded as dose 1 each year due to the different vaccine being administered.

Vaccine availability, ordering and storage

Distribution of funded influenza vaccine will commence when stocks are available, using the existing South Australian vaccine ordering systems and fortnightly delivery schedules.

Weekly orders of influenza vaccines will be available for 6 weeks from April 12 to assist providers in maintaining appropriate stock levels on a weekly basis. Urgent orders will not be available during this 6 week period.

It is expected that the first available date for ordering influenza vaccines will be March 26, however:

- > not all vaccines required for each funded category will be available immediately from this date
- > providers will only be able to order the vaccines that are available at the time of placing their order. For example, if only vaccine for those aged 65 years and older is available, this is the only category of influenza vaccine that will be visible on the online vaccine ordering page
- > vaccine for people who are experiencing homelessness who are not eligible under the nationally funded influenza program should be ordered under the 'State' column

Providers are strongly encouraged to check the Vaccine Distribution Centre (VDC) noticeboard daily at www.sa.tollhealthcare.com for updated information regarding influenza vaccine supply and ordering.

Providers are recommended to manage their vaccine ordering and patient bookings with careful regard to vaccine availability:

- > proactively manage patient enquiries and communications regarding the confirmed time of influenza vaccine availability.
- > plan clinic dates and bookings once vaccine delivery dates are confirmed:
 - > routine orders placed by the usual cut off time for your area will be delivered on your scheduled routine delivery date.
 - > urgent orders will be dispatched on the first available date after the order is received. Urgent orders will be accommodated as soon as possible, however, during peak periods urgent orders may take up to several days to be dispatched from the warehouse.

- > a confirmation email will be sent from the VDC on the day the order is dispatched from the warehouse.
- > urgent orders will not be available during the 6-week period of weekly deliveries in 2021.

Consider the following when placing vaccine orders:

1. Only order the number of vaccines required until the next delivery
2. Consider your vaccine storage space. Order only an amount that can be safely stored in original packaging and be clearly labelled for each age cohort without overcrowding the fridge. You may need an additional purpose built vaccine fridge for additional storage space. If you are not able to safely store the amount of vaccine required for a two week period, you will need to contact VDC.
3. Consider your patient age cohorts and eligibility. For example: how many active patients does your practice have in each of the eligible funded age groups and categories?
4. Calculate how many vaccinations your service can provide each day. Consider how you will plan and manage your bookings and how you will structure any influenza specific clinics.

Program resources

Health professionals

- > [Annual Funded Influenza Program, 2021 South Australian Schedule](#)
- > [Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation \(ATAGI\) Statement on the Administration of Seasonal Influenza Vaccines in 2021](#)
- > Australian Government Department of Health: health.gov.au/immunisation
- > Australian Immunisation Handbook (online), [Influenza chapter](#)
- > [National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance](#) – Influenza Fact Sheet
- > [ATAGI Advice on the relative timing of administering influenza and COVID-19 vaccines in 2021](#)
- > Stop the flu sahealth.sa.gov.au/flu

Public

- > [2021 Funded Annual Influenza Program – Consumer Frequently asked questions \(web resource\)](#)
- > [Flu vaccine for children - what you need to know \(brochure\)](#)
- > [Flu Vaccine Facts \(A5 pad-tear off information leaflets\)](#)

For more information

**Immunisation Section
Communicable Disease Control Branch**

Telephone: 1300 232 272
www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/immunisationprovider

Public-12-A2

© Department for Health and Wellbeing, Government of South Australia. All rights reserved.



www.ausgoal.gov.au/creative-commons



**Government
of South Australia**

SA Health