

## Immunisation Provider Information Resource

# 2023 Flu Vaccination

## ‘What you need to know’

To help structure and manage the 2023 Influenza Immunisation Program, and assist and support with program implementation, please refer to the following information about 2023 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 2023 program are quadrivalent vaccines (QIV) and contain viruses for two influenza A and two influenza B strains.

The funded quadrivalent vaccines in 2023 contain the following strains:

- > an A/Sydney/5/2021 (H1N1) pdm09-like virus
- > an A/Darwin/9/2021 (H3N2)-like virus
- > a B/Austria/1359417/2021 (B/Victoria lineage)-like virus
- > a B/Phuket/3073/2013 (B/Yamagata lineage)-like virus.

The funded influenza vaccines in 2023 will be:

- > Vaxigrip Tetra® 0.5ml for those aged 6 months and older
- > Fluarix® Tetra 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 in autumn, 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 2023 influenza vaccine.

The [ATAGI advice on seasonal influenza vaccines in 2023](#) states that influenza and COVID-19 vaccines can be administered on the same day.

## Eligible cohorts for the National Immunisation Program (NIP)

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

Funded influenza vaccine should be given only to eligible cohorts.

### Pregnant women

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

Recommendations for vaccination:

- > If a woman has received the 2022 influenza vaccine in her current pregnancy it is recommended to administer a 2023 influenza vaccine.
- > If a woman has received a 2023 influenza vaccine before becoming pregnant it is recommended to administer another 2023 influenza vaccine during pregnancy to protect the unborn child.
- > If a woman has received a 2023 influenza vaccine during pregnancy, there is no recommendation to revaccinate with another 2023 vaccine in the same pregnancy.

**Ensure that the vaccine is recorded on the woman's antenatal record 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 the 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: 2023 South Australia Schedule](#).

## State funded program

### People experiencing homelessness

In addition to the nationally funded influenza program, state funded influenza vaccines are available in 2023 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
- > severely crowded dwellings.

Many people who are experiencing homelessness will be eligible for funded influenza vaccine under the nationally funded influenza program and 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 information and recommendations regarding influenza vaccination for egg allergic individuals:

- > Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care - Immunisation: [health.gov.au/immunisation](https://www.health.gov.au/immunisation)
- > ASCIA Guidelines - Vaccination of the egg-allergic individual: [allergy.org.au/hp/papers/vaccination-of-the-egg-allergic-individual](https://www.allergy.org.au/hp/papers/vaccination-of-the-egg-allergic-individual).

## Reporting 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. 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.

AIR has been enhanced to enable immunisation providers to enter Afluria Quad and Fluarix Tetra as either NIP or non-NIP in 2023. This will enable better surveillance of the uptake of flu vaccines through the funded program separate to those receiving these privately.

## Vaccine availability, ordering and storage

Influenza vaccines will be available for ordering on 23 March 2023.

- > 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.

Distribution of funded influenza vaccine will commence when stocks are available, anticipated from 27 March, using the existing South Australian vaccine ordering systems and fortnightly delivery schedules.

- > Weekly orders of influenza vaccines will be available for 4 weeks from 27 March to assist providers in maintaining appropriate stock levels.
- > Urgent orders will not be available during weeks 1 to 4 of the ordering period.
- > Please note weeks 2, 3 and 5 are short weeks due to public holidays.

From mid-March 2023, refer to the ordering system delivery schedule tab for updated order cut-off times and delivery dates for weeks 1 and 2.

**Providers are strongly encouraged to check the [Vaccine Distribution Centre \(VDC\)](#) noticeboard daily at [vdc.sa.gov.au](http://vdc.sa.gov.au) 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 on the day the order is dispatched from the warehouse.

Consider the following when placing vaccine orders:

- > Only order the number of vaccines required until the next delivery.
- > 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.
- > 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?
- > 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.
- > Clearly label vaccine storage baskets with recommended age groups to avoid administration errors and store separate to private influenza vaccines in the fridge.

When ordering vaccines, please keep in mind that the number of vaccination bookings you receive in 2023 may be impacted as some community pharmacies will now also be offering funded influenza vaccines to the following groups:

- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander People from 5 years of age
- pregnant women
- adults 65 years and older.

## Program resources

- > SA Health – Stop the flu: [sahealth.sa.gov.au/flu](https://sahealth.sa.gov.au/flu)
- > Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care: [health.gov.au/immunisation](https://health.gov.au/immunisation)
- > [Annual Funded Influenza Program: 2023 South Australia Schedule](#)
- > Australian Immunisation Handbook – Influenza chapter: [immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au/contents/vaccine-preventable-diseases/influenza-flu](https://immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au/contents/vaccine-preventable-diseases/influenza-flu)
- > National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance – Influenza: [ncirs.org.au/ncirs-fact-sheets-faqs-and-other-resources/influenza](https://ncirs.org.au/ncirs-fact-sheets-faqs-and-other-resources/influenza)

## For more information

**Immunisation Section**  
**Communicable Disease Control Branch**  
[www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/immunisation](https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/immunisation)  
**Telephone: 1300 232 272**  
[www.sahealth.sa.gov.au](https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au)

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