



2021 PHARMACIST-ADMINISTERED INFLUENZA VACCINATION PROGRAM FOR OLDER ADULTS

INFORMATION FOR COMMUNITY PHARMACISTS

Friday, 12 March 2021

KEY MESSAGES

- National Immunisation Program ([NIP](#)) funded influenza vaccines for persons aged 65 years and over will continue to be provided through community pharmacies, through the [Pharmacist-administered influenza vaccination program for older adults](#)
- All community pharmacies wishing to participate in the program are required to register for the Program in 2021.
- Registration for the Program is open from Friday 12th March to Sunday 21st March 2021 ([deadline 5pm](#)).
- In 2021 WA Health will implement a process to pre-allocate NIP-funded influenza vaccines to participating community pharmacies in WA.
- It is WA Health's intent to commence distribution of influenza to providers in late-March, depending on vaccine supply.

About the Program

- NIP-funded seasonal influenza vaccines for persons aged 65 years and over will continue to be provided through community pharmacies, through the '[Pharmacist administered influenza vaccination program for older adults](#)' following the completion of the trial period from 2018-2020.
- Under this Program, pharmacies that have registered for the program will receive Fluad® Quad from the nominated wholesaler.
- Pharmacies participating in the Program **MUST** work within the scope of the Structured Administration Supply Arrangements (SASA) - [Administration of Influenza Vaccines by Pharmacists](#) including that vaccination will be performed by a pharmacist who has completed the training in Appendix 1, and that the vaccination is administered in a setting that meets the requirements of Appendix 2.

Eligibility to register for the program

- The Program is open to all community pharmacies with pharmacists who have successfully completed an immunisation course approved by the Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Health, as outlined in Appendix 1 of the [Administration of Influenza Vaccines by Pharmacists](#) (SASA).
- The registration process requires agreement and compliance with the terms and conditions of the Program.
- Community pharmacies, both new and returning, must register in 2021 to participate in the Program.
- Pharmacies that have not passed recent inspection by the Western Australian Department of Health Medicine and Poisons Regulation Branch are **not** eligible to register for the Program.

Registration for the program

- Community pharmacies can register for the program via [the online registration form](#).
- Registration for the program is open from **Friday 12th March to Sunday 21st March 2021 (deadline 5pm)**.
- No late submissions will be accepted.

Seasonal influenza vaccines in 2021

Over 65s vaccine in 2021

- As part of the *Pharmacist administered influenza vaccination program for older adults*, participating pharmacies will be provided with 2021 Fluad® Quad.
- For adults aged ≥ 65 years, the adjuvanted influenza vaccine, Fluad® Quad, is preferentially recommended over standard influenza vaccine.
- Fluad® Quad is licensed for adults 65 years of age and over and should not be administered to anyone below the age of 65.
- Pharmacist immunisers are reminded that they are required to advise persons about the availability of free vaccination services through bulk-billing general practitioners, prior to administering Fluad® Quad.
- Pharmacies may not charge patients for the cost of the vaccine but may charge a service fee for administration at their own discretion.
- All 2020 formulation of influenza vaccines have now expired and should be disposed of immediately to avoid vaccine administration errors.
- You **must** report vaccine expiry wastage of 2020 Fluad® Quad, using the online Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Expiry Report Form available from the WA Health [cold chain management](#) website.

Influenza virus strains included in the 2021 Southern Hemisphere seasonal influenza vaccines

The influenza virus strains included in the 2021 government-funded (egg-based) seasonal influenza vaccines in Australia are:

- A (H1N1): A/Victoria/2570/2019 A/Brisbane/02/2018 (H1N1) pdm09-like virus;
- A (H3N2): A/Hong Kong/2671/2019 A/South Australia/34/2019 (H3N2)-like virus;
- B: B/Washington/02/2019-like (B/Victoria lineage) virus;
- B: B/Phuket/3073/2013-like (B/Yamagata lineage) virus.

Changes to ordering and distribution of NIP-funded influenza vaccines in 2021

Pre-allocation of 2021 Fluad® Quad to community pharmacies

- In order to support equitable distribution of influenza vaccines and planning activities, WA Health plans to pre-allocate 2021 Fluad® Quad to participating pharmacies.
- Pre-allocated volumes will be based on vaccine supply, pharmacy demographic data, and vaccine usage in 2020.
- Pharmacies that have registered for the program will be contacted regarding pre-allocated volumes in due course.

Accessing vaccines

- Fluad® Quad will be distributed through Sigma Healthcare at no cost to the pharmacy.
- Further details will be provided to community pharmacies that register for the program in due course.
- Please note, if your pharmacy does not have hold an account with Sigma Healthcare, there may be a delay in distribution.

Co-administration with COVID-19 vaccines

- Giving an influenza vaccine within 14 days of a COVID-19 vaccine is not recommended.
- Influenza vaccine can be given before or after any dose of a COVID-19 vaccination, with a minimum interval of 14 days.
- When scheduling influenza and COVID-19 vaccines, consider the following principles:
 - *Individuals in Phase 1a for COVID-19 vaccination should receive the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as it is available to them, and then receive their influenza vaccine.*

- For more information, refer to the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) [Advice on the relative timing of administering influenza and COVID-19 vaccines in 2021](#).
- Advice on co-administration may change. The most up to date information will be on the [Health website](#).

Eligible groups

- Any person aged 65 years and over is eligible for a seasonal influenza vaccine under the National Immunisation Program (NIP).
- Pharmacist immunisers are reminded that they must undertake [pre-vaccination screening](#), as specified in the [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#) prior to the administration of Fluad® Quad.
- As the immunisation service provider, you must check the individual's immunisation history before administering any vaccination. This is particularly relevant due to recommendations around co-administration of influenza and COVID-19 vaccines.

Further important information

Mandatory reporting of all vaccines to the AIR

- Effective 1 March 2021, it is **mandatory** for all influenza vaccinations to be reported to the AIR, in accordance with the [Australian Immunisation Register Amendment \(Reporting\) Rules 2021](#).

Keeping up- to-date with current information

- WA Health will contact you with further updates as more information becomes available.
- Please ensure you complete the FREE 2-hour 2021 WA Health Immunisation Education Influenza Module, available [here](#).
- Make sure you have subscribed to Vaccine Updates email distribution list [here](#).
- It is important to read this letter in conjunction with the [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#) and the [WA Immunisation Schedule](#).

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to protecting Western Australians from influenza.

Yours sincerely



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Friday 12th March 2021