Western Australia influenza immunisation program 2019

Information for health providers

As a health provider, you are a trusted source of information for your patients. Please read the below information on the 2019 WA influenza immunisation program and protect your patients by opportunistically offering influenza immunisation to all eligible patients.

The strains included in the 2019 influenza vaccines are:

- A (H1N1): an A/Michigan/45/2015 (H1N1) pdm09 like virus – unchanged from 2018
- A (H3N2): an A/Switzerland/8060/2017 (H3N2) like virus – changed from 2018
- B: a B/Colorado/06/2017 like virus (B/Victoria/2/87 lineage) (not included in the TIV) – changed from 2018
- B: a B/Phuket/3073/2013 like virus (B/Yamagata/16/88 lineage) – unchanged from 2018.

Eligibility for government funded influenza vaccine

Eligibility for government funded influenza vaccines in WA in 2019 is unchanged from 2018. The following individuals in WA are eligible to receive government funded vaccine:

- people 65 years and older
- children 6 months to less than 5 years
- pregnant women (any trimester)
- Aboriginal people 6 months and older
- individuals 6 months and older who have medical conditions that place them at risk for complications of influenza, namely:
  - cardiac disease
  - chronic neurological conditions
  - chronic respiratory conditions
  - diabetes and other metabolic disorders
  - haematological disorders
  - impaired immunity
  - renal disease
  - children 6 months to 10 years receiving long term aspirin therapy.
## 2019 Government funded influenza vaccines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Registered age group</th>
<th>Quatrvivalent</th>
<th>Enhanced trivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FluQuadri™</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 6 months</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 6-35 months (&lt; 3 years)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 3 to &lt; 5 years</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 5 years</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 65 years</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Registered for use in this age group but enhanced trivalent influenza vaccine (TIV) is preferred Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Note:
* The age eligibility of Fluarix Tetra® has been extended to include children from 6 months of age, however the WA government funded program is supplying FluQuadri Junior for children aged 6 months to less than 3 years and encourages providers to use this stock for children in this age cohort.

*# The age indication for Afluria Quad® has been extended to include children from 5 years of age.

## Flu immunisation for children

### Why recommend influenza immunisation for young children?

Children without underlying medical conditions can also develop serious illness with influenza. Australian and overseas experience indicates most influenza-related paediatric hospitalisations and deaths occur among children without underlying medical conditions. Annual influenza immunisation is strongly recommended and government funded for children 6 months to less than 5 years.

The National Health and Medical Research Council, Australia’s peak body for developing health advice for the community and health professionals, recommends annual immunisation for people 6 months or older to reduce their risk of becoming ill with influenza.

Several international studies have documented the benefits of immunising healthy young children against influenza.¹⁻⁵

### Co-administration with other vaccines

Influenza vaccines can be administered concurrently with other vaccines. However, there is a small increased risk of fever and febrile convulsions with the concurrent administration of influenza vaccine and 13-valent pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (13vPCV) in children 6 months to less than 5 years, especially those 12 to 24 months of age, compared to giving these vaccines separately. Providers should advise parents of the risk and outline the option of administering this vaccine separately. Refer to the Australian Immunisation Handbook 
Key points to remember about influenza vaccine dosing in children

- Children 6 months to under 5 years receiving influenza vaccine for the first time need two doses at least four weeks apart. Children who have received one or more doses of influenza vaccine in a previous season only need one dose of influenza vaccine in the current and future seasons.

- Providers should ensure all influenza vaccinations administered to children are recorded in the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) under the specific brand name used.

Flu immunisation for adults

Influenza causes illness in people of all ages. Immunisation is the single most important measure available to prevent flu infection and its complications. Annual influenza immunisation is necessary to maintain immunity to influenza.

Influenza immunisation is recommended annually, even if a person has been immunised in any previous year with an influenza vaccine that contains the same strains. This is because the immunity to influenza acquired by immunisation wanes rapidly.

People with certain immunocompromising conditions (i.e. haemotopoietic stem cell transplant or solid organ transplant) who are receiving the influenza vaccine for the first time after transplant are recommended to receive two vaccine doses at least four weeks apart (irrespective of age) and one dose annually thereafter.

Recommend influenza immunisation to your pregnant patients

In 2012 the World Health Organisation declared that pregnant women should receive the highest priority for influenza immunisation. This recommendation was based on “compelling evidence of a substantial risk of severe disease in pregnant women, evidence that vaccination is effective against severe disease, and the evidence supporting secondary protection of infants under six months, in whom disease burden is also high”.

In addition, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the National Health and Medical Research Council recommend that all pregnant women be offered influenza immunisation during pregnancy.

Reporting reactions to influenza vaccine

The safety of influenza immunisation in adults and children – both with and without high-risk medical conditions – will be closely monitored using a combination of ongoing passive reporting via the Western Australian Vaccine Safety Surveillance system (WAVSS) and active follow-up on a subset of adults/children.

If an individual or a parent of a child reports symptoms occurring post immunisation which could suggest a reaction to the vaccine, report this reaction through WAVSS on the Adverse Events Following Immunisation – Clinical Assessment Network website at aefican.org.au or alternatively call the Central Immunisation Clinic on 9321 1312, Monday to Friday (8.30am to 4.30pm). Individuals/parents can also be advised that they can report their concerns directly to the Central Immunisation Clinic at aefican.org.au
Further information

For further information on influenza and influenza immunisation:

- Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI).
  immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au
- Consumer Medicine Information for influenza vaccines. ebs.tga.gov.au
- Western Australian Department of Health website. health.wa.gov.au/infectiousdiseases

1. Santtu Heinonen MD, Heli Silvennoinen MD, Pasi Lehtinen MD, Raija Vainionpää PhD, Thedi Ziegler PhD, Dr Terho Heikkinen MD. Effectiveness of inactivated influenza vaccine in children aged 9 months to 3 years: an observational cohort study. The Lancet Infectious Diseases – 1 January 2011 (Vol. 11, Issue 1, Pages 23-29).


