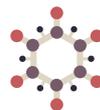


the 2018 influenza guide for general practitioners

Influenza virus strains can change from year to year – this is why it is important to have a yearly influenza vaccination.



IMMUNISATION
COALITION

Influenza is a potentially fatal disease that is estimated to cause more deaths than accidents on roads: 1500–3500 influenza deaths annually.

CONFIRMED CASES IN 2017¹
249,788

249,788¹ Australians were diagnosed with laboratory confirmed influenza in 2017. It is estimated that lab confirmed influenza represents only the **TIP OF THE ICEBERG** in the community.

HOSPITALISATIONS

Influenza in Australia resulted in more than 29,000 hospitalisations in 2017².

9% of influenza patients were admitted directly to ICU².

¹ National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System at 31 December 2017

² Australia Influenza Surveillance Report 22 November 2017



IMPACT ON GPs

GP consultation rate **HIGHEST SINCE 2009 PANDEMIC**²

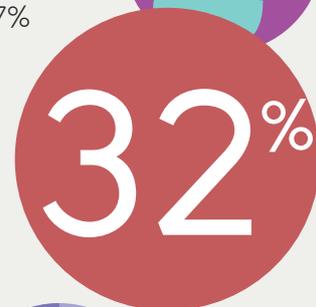
41% of people with fever and cough **SAW THEIR GP**²

PEOPLE MOST AT RISK

CHILDREN

In 2017 **CHILDREN AGED LESS THAN 15 YEARS** accounted for 27% of all influenza notifications¹.

32% of hospitalisations were in **CHILDREN LESS THAN 2 YEARS** of age²



OLDER PEOPLE

91% of all deaths in **PEOPLE OVER 65**²



New enhanced vaccines will be available for people 65 and over on the NIP

RISKS OF INFLUENZA:

HOSPITALISATION
EXACERBATION

DEATH

VACCINATION HELPS TO:

- Prevent infection
- Protect against non-communicable diseases
- Protect against complications from existing non-communicable diseases

Doctors influence the decision to be vaccinated

A 2017 Immunisation Coalition study showed that more than half the people who got a flu shot in 2017 made their decision based on the recommendation of their GP.

You play an active role in protecting thousands of Australians who are at risk of influenza complications. Advise your patients on the benefits of a flu shot.

These steps can help facilitate influenza vaccination programs in general practice:

- **FLAG RECORDS** of patients at increased risk of influenza complications.
- **REMIND PATIENTS** of the benefits of vaccination.
- **ORGANISE VACCINATION CLINICS.**



Who should be vaccinated?



The Immunisation Coalition strongly supports annual vaccination of all those at risk of complications from influenza and of anyone over 6 months of age wishing to avoid infection, as recommended in the Australian Immunisation Handbook 10th Edition, available on the Immunise Australia website: www.immunise.health.gov.au

Free influenza vaccine is available under the National Immunisation Program (NIP) for people in the following risk groups:

- Older adults (65+)
- Indigenous Australians (6 months to <5 years and 15+)
- Pregnant women
- People aged 6 months and over with **medical conditions that can lead to complications from influenza** (such as severe asthma, lung or heart disease, chronic neurological disease, renal and metabolic disease, and impaired immunity).

Details of the current seasonal influenza vaccination program are available on the Immunise Australia website: www.immunise.health.gov.au

Other conditions that might put people at a high risk of influenza complications include:

- Obesity
- Stroke
- Tobacco smoking
- Down syndrome
- Residents of nursing homes and other longterm facilities
- Homeless people

These are not funded to receive free influenza vaccination.

Timing of vaccination for elderly patients

Vaccination is encouraged throughout the influenza season and in some settings such as pregnant women and residents of northern Australia, this should occur as soon as vaccine is available.

The duration of protection for elderly people and residents of nursing homes is shorter, perhaps only six months, so it is important not to vaccinate them too early. While opportunistic vaccination is always important, dedicated clinics for elderly patients should occur in April/May.

It's never too late to vaccinate.

Which vaccines will be available in 2018?

In 2018, two new enhanced vaccines will be available for people 65 and over, through the NIP. They are Fluzone High Dose® (Sanofi Pasteur), which is 4 times the dose, and Fludac® (Seqirus), an adjuvanted vaccine. In addition, an updated QIV will be available for all adults under 65 and will be available under the NIP as well as the private market. Specific brands are recommended for use in children over 6 months of age (see *Influenza and children* below).

2018 Vaccine Composition

A (H1N1): an A/Michigan/45/2015 (H1N1)pdm09 like virus
A (H3N2): an A/Singapore/INFIMH-16-0019/2016 (H3N2) like virus
B: a B/Phuket/3073/2013 like virus
QIV will contain viruses listed above, plus the additional B/Brisbane/60/2008 like virus.



Influenza and pregnancy



"VACCINATING PREGNANT WOMEN against influenza gives a 3 for 1 benefit:

- protects the woman during pregnancy and in the early months of motherhood
- protects the young infant by trans-placental antibodies
- protects the young infant by antibodies in breast milk."

ELIZABETH MCCARTHY, Senior Lecturer, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, University of Melbourne, Perinatal Centre, Mercy Hospital for Women

Influenza and heart attacks



"Current research suggests that the flu shot may reduce **THE RISK OF HEART ATTACKS** in middle-aged people with narrowed arteries by one third to almost half. A large body of evidence shows that influenza vaccine could be protective against heart attacks and cardiovascular disease, which is the leading cause of death globally and in Australia."

PROFESSOR RAINA MACINTYRE, NHMRC Principal Research Fellow, Head, Bio-Response Program, Kirby Institute for Infection and Immunity, Faculty of Medicine at the University of New South Wales and Professor of Infectious Diseases Epidemiology

Influenza and children

Children with underlying medical conditions are at particular risk of severe complications from influenza and may be entitled to free vaccine under the NIP. The three vaccines available for children this season are:

- **FluarixTetra® (GlaxoSmithKline)** for children aged 3 and over
- **FluQuadri Junior® (Sanofi Pasteur)** for children aged 6 months to less than 3 years.
- **FluQuadri® (Sanofi Pasteur)** for children aged 3 to 18 years.

Some states in Australia will be offering free flu vaccine for children 6 months to under 5 years.

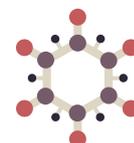


Published by the Immunisation Coalition in March 2018
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The Immunisation Coalition is a not for profit advocacy group with a mission to create awareness regarding the importance of immunisation. Immunisation still provides the best protection against infectious diseases. We work with consumers, health professionals and organisations with an interest in immunisation and government health agencies, ensuring that the information provided to consumers through our website and other communication channels is current, easily understood and scientifically informed.

Visit www.immunisationcoalition.org.au and www.flusmart.org.au

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