

Memorandum

To:	QCH Medical, Nursing and Pharmacy Staff
Copies to:	IMPS, QSIS
From:	Queensland Specialist Immunisation Service (QSIS)
Contact no.:	3068 5600
Subject:	Seasonal Influenza Vaccine 2023 – Government Funded Program (Patients)

As you are aware influenza season is approaching and staff have an important role in recommending influenza vaccination to our patients and their families. The vaccine is recommended for all persons ≥ 6 months of age and government funded for specific at-risk groups.

The government funded **Quadrivalent Seasonal Influenza (Flu) Vaccine** is available from **27th March** for the following groups: -

- All children 6 months to < 5 years
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people ≥ 6 months of age
- Medical at Risk
 - Cardiac disease
 - Chronic respiratory conditions
 - Chronic neurological conditions
 - Immunocompromising conditions
 - Diabetes and other metabolic disorders
 - Renal disease
 - Haematological disorders
 - Long term aspirin therapy in children aged 6 months to 10 years
- All adults aged ≥ 65 years (recommended high dose/higher-immunogenicity quadrivalent influenza vaccine)
- Pregnant women (at any stage of pregnancy)

Quadrivalent vaccine provides active immunisation against four influenza strains

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

In 2023, the following funded Quadrivalent Influenza Vaccines [QIV] will be available through the National Immunisation Program (NIP) for children.

From 6 months of age (until < 65 years):

- Vaxigrip-tetra® (Sanofi) [IM, 0.5mL] - CHQ Pharmacy are stocking this vaccine
- Fluarix-tetra® vaccine (GlaxoSmithKline) [IM, 0.5mL]

From 5 years of age (until < 65 years):

- Afluria Quad® vaccine (Seqirus) [IM, 0.5mL]

Children under 9 years require two doses at least 4 weeks apart in the first year they receive the vaccine; with a single dose required in subsequent years.

A 2-dose schedule is recommended for all patients in the first year post transplant and can be considered for those on high level immune suppression.

Timing of vaccination:

- Before onset of influenza season – peak influenza period is typically June to September
- While protection is generally expected to last for the whole season, optimal protection occurs within the first 3-4 months following vaccination.
- It is never too late to vaccinate – vaccination should be offered while influenza viruses are circulating, and vaccine is available.
- Revaccination later in the same year is not routinely recommended, but may benefit some individuals due to personal circumstances, such as travel, transplant.
- For further information see: <https://beta.health.gov.au/services/flu-influenza-immunisation-service>
- Influenza vaccine can be given on the same day as other vaccines including COVID 19 vaccine.

Seasonal Influenza Vaccine is available at:-

1. General Practitioner or local immunisation provider.
2. Outpatients – Prescriber to order vaccine on ieMR, vaccine will be dispensed by pharmacy and can be administered by staff as per medication policy.
3. Inpatients – Prescriber to order vaccine on ieMR, vaccine will be dispensed by pharmacy and can be administered by staff as per medication policy.
4. 2g Immunisation centre – outpatients or inpatients (following discharge) can present directly to the centre, no appointment necessary.
 - a. Immunisation Centre is open Mon-Fri 8am-4pm.
 - b. Private influenza vaccine is available at a competitive price for those not eligible for funded vaccine
 - c. Parents, family members and siblings can also receive the influenza vaccination (funded or private).

Of Note:

[∞]High dose/higher-immunogenicity quadrivalent influenza vaccine is recommended for those aged ≥ 65 years of age. This will be available at the immunisation centre (2g) for eligible individuals.

The seasonal influenza vaccine **does not** provide protection against coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and COVID-19 vaccination is highly recommended for those that are eligible. Precautions such as handwashing, social distancing and cough etiquette are important in preventing infection.

Staff Influenza Program:

- The funded staff seasonal influenza program is co-ordinated through IMPS and will commence in April.
- Information about the program will be available at <https://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/childrenshealth/html/chq-infection>
- The staff program will be funding a quadrivalent influenza vaccine which will NOT be available at 2g immunisation centre. Staff can attend the immunisation centre to access government funded vaccine (if eligible) or private purchase vaccine.
- Staff over 65 years of age will be able to access the high dose/higher-immunogenicity quadrivalent influenza vaccine through the staff vaccination program in 2023.

Date: 23rd March, 2023