

Early advice on the 2016 Seasonal Influenza Vaccine

Who is eligible to receive free National Immunisation Program influenza vaccines?

Under the National Immunisation Program, the following groups are eligible to receive the free influenza vaccine:

- Pregnant women.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged six months to less than five years.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years of age and over.
- People aged 65 years and over.
- People aged six months and over with medical conditions predisposing them to severe influenza.

The 2016 National Immunisation Program influenza vaccines

This year, two quadrivalent influenza vaccines (QIVs) will be available free of charge to eligible people under the National Immunisation Program:

- Sanofi's *FluQuadri® Junior* for children under three years of age.
- GSK's *Fluarix® Tetra* for people aged three years and older.

Trivalent influenza vaccines (TIVs) will not be provided under the National Immunisation Program in 2016. TIVs and QIVs will be available to purchase on the private market.

The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) recommends the use of QIVs in preference to TIVs. However, TIVs are an acceptable alternative particularly if QIVs are not available.

When will the National Immunisation Program influenza vaccine be available?

State and territory health departments will deliver National Immunisation Program funded vaccines in early April 2016, subject to vaccine supply. You can administer the National Immunisation Program vaccine to eligible people as soon as you have the vaccine in your practice.

What you need to do

Familiarise yourself with the ATAGI advice for vaccination providers on the administration of seasonal influenza vaccines. This will be available on the Immunise Australia website from mid-February at www.immunise.health.gov.au

Look out for the Chief Medical Officer's further advice, with resources for your practice or clinic, in mid-March 2016. The Department of Health will also produce consumer fact sheets, including one specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. These fact sheets can be downloaded from the Immunise Australia website.

Note that in 2016, for the first time, ATAGI will also produce advice for consumers, which will also be available on the Immunise Australia website.

Share this information with others in your practice, including locums, who administer or prescribe vaccines.

Find out more

From mid-March 2016, the Immunise Australia website will have resources available for health providers and consumers.

The website also includes information and resources about other vaccines on the National Immunisation Program, immunisation generally, and ATAGI advice.