

FLU SEASON UPDATE

GPs, AMSs, Community Health, Paediatricians,
Children's Hospitals

Please distribute this information to all doctors,
nurses and staff in your practice



Health

H18/61423

1. Flu cases are likely to escalate in the coming weeks.
2. Influenza A (H1N1) is the predominant circulating strain this year.
3. Free influenza vaccine for ALL children aged from 6 months to under 5 years of age, pregnant women and other high risk groups is available from the State Vaccine Centre.

Influenza activity is increasing across NSW.

- Most influenza cases that have been typed so far this year have had the influenza A (H1N1) strain. Children and young adults are particularly susceptible to this strain.
- Please vaccinate eligible children, pregnant women and other susceptible young adults as soon as possible, to maximise immunity prior to the start of the flu season.
- Children aged under 5 years are at increased risk of influenza infection and hospitalisation.
- Influenza in children contributes significantly to influenza transmission in the community. A review of the evidence for vaccinating children under 5 is available at www.health.nsw.gov.au/flu vaccine

Recommendations for pregnant women

- Influenza vaccine can be given at any stage of pregnancy and is recommended by RANZCOG
- A review of the evidence on vaccination of pregnant women is also available through the link below.

Recommendations for children 6 months to under 5 years

- Give two doses of flu vaccine at least 4 weeks apart to children receiving influenza vaccine for the first time.
- Only use **FluQuadri™ Junior** for children 6 months to 35 months of age. Use **FluQuadri™** or **Fluarix Tetra™** for children 3 or 4 years of age
- Ensure your practice software is up to date so that all vaccine doses administered to children and adults are reported to the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).
- Use your practice software to identify and recall eligible children not yet vaccinated

Ordering influenza vaccine

- NSW has enough vaccine to meet expected demand for people eligible for free vaccine: children 6 months up to 5 years, pregnant women, adults with significant medical conditions, Aboriginal people, and people 65 years and over.
- Order influenza vaccine online at: <https://nsw.tollhealthcare.com/>.
- Select vaccine suitable for the ages of your patients – order volumes for some age groups are restricted.
- Ring the State Vaccine Centre on 1300 656 132 if you have not already registered for online ordering.

See www.health.nsw.gov.au/flu vaccine for links to all information about influenza in NSW in 2018.

Yours sincerely

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Director, Communicable Diseases
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