

POSITION STATEMENT FROM THE AUSTRALIAN CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER AND STATE AND
TERRITORY CHIEF HEALTH OFFICERS

Priority groups for pandemic (H1N1) vaccine program

Endorsed on 1 September 2009

In Australia, the pandemic vaccination program will be focused on vaccinating certain groups at higher risk of exposure (for example, health care workers) and those vulnerable to more severe outcomes as identified in the PROTECT annex to the Australian Health Management Plan for Pandemic Influenza; including pregnant women, indigenous people and people with underlying medical conditions. Table 1 provides further details on these priority groups.

While emphasis will be on targeting these priority groups, the opportunistic vaccination of friends, family, and carers of vulnerable people or anyone who wishes to protect themselves from pandemic influenza is also encouraged.

Any individual wishing to be vaccinated should see their General Practitioner or health care provider.

Table 1: Australian Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 vaccine priority groups

Target group	Definition
Pregnant women	All pregnant women
Those children (initially 10 years and above ¹) and adults with underlying chronic medical conditions including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chronic respiratory conditions • Immuno-suppression • Cancer • Diabetes mellitus • Cardiac disease • Chronic Renal disease • Chronic metabolic diseases • Haemoglobinopathies • Chronic neurological diseases 	Requires clinical judgement <p>Including asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease</p> <p>Including HIV/AIDS infection, use of immunosuppressive drugs</p> <p>Only malignant cancers</p> <p>Not including simple hypertension</p>
Individuals with moderate to severe obesity	BMI > 35
Health care and community care workers (including volunteers and students)	<p>Health care worker: a person who has direct contact with patients, either in the community or hospital setting, in both public and private practice settings, focusing on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff within or working with Aboriginal Medical Services, general practice, remote or community health clinics, and ambulance services. • All hospital and outpatient staff focusing on those who have direct patient contact. • All staff working in acute care clinics/satellite clinics that provide care, limited to diabetic clinics, alcohol and drug rehabilitation, dialysis and oncology services and perinatal care. <p>Community and residential care workers: Aged care and disability services workers who have direct patient contact while providing community and residential services to vulnerable groups.</p>
Indigenous people and remote and isolated communities with vulnerable people	<p>Self identification of indigenous.</p> <p>Examples of remote and isolated communities include research communities in the Australian Antarctic Territory and subantarctic islands (vaccination to be provided prior to departure).</p>
Children (initially 10 years and above ¹) in special schools	Children (initially 10 years and above ¹) in schools and institutions that are exclusively special needs based. This does not include mainstream schools with special needs programs.
Parents and Guardians of children aged 0 to 6 months	Parents and Guardian (primary carers) of children aged 0 to 6 months

¹ Vaccination of children 9 years and under will commence once safety data in this age group is available.