



Australian Government

Department of Health

Secretary

2022 National Immunisation Program influenza program update

Dear Colleague

Following on from the announcement today from the Minister for Health, the Hon Greg Hunt MP, I am writing to provide important information about influenza vaccines available under the National Immunisation Program (NIP) for the 2022 Influenza season.

Influenza vaccination is particularly important this year. Over the COVID-19 period, reduced circulation of influenza virus and lower levels of influenza vaccine coverage compared with previous years may have resulted in low levels of community immunity. With international borders reopening a resurgence of influenza is expected in 2022, with the Australian community potentially more vulnerable to the virus this year.

Influenza vaccination is recommended for everyone aged 6 months and over, and provided free under the NIP for those people most at risk. NIP funded cohorts include adults 65 years and over, children under five, pregnant women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and people with certain medical conditions. The program offers a specific, enhanced influenza vaccine to protect people 65 years and over.

Government funded influenza vaccines will become available from 4 April, subject to local supply arrangements in each state and territory. If you have not already done so, please ensure you place your orders for your 2022 NIP influenza vaccines through the usual channels in your state or territory. Contact your state or territory immunisation program if you have any questions about ordering vaccines.

Vaccines start to be available from the first week of April. The timing of vaccination should aim to achieve the highest level of protection during the peak of the influenza season, usually from June to September in most parts of Australia.

Influenza vaccines can be co-administered (given on the same day) with COVID-19 vaccines. The best protection this winter is for people to receive an influenza vaccine and be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 including any recommended booster doses if eligible. Please consider opportunities to increase uptake of influenza vaccines by co-administering with COVID-19 vaccines where appropriate.

Resources to support administration practice are available from the Department of Health website at [health.gov.au/influenza-resources](https://www.health.gov.au/influenza-resources). Hardcopy resources and advice from the Acting Chief Medical Officer are being mailed to GPs, practices, select medical specialists who see patients who would benefit from vaccination and Aboriginal Medical Services nationwide. These should start to arrive in the coming weeks.

Vaccination providers can also get the latest National Immunisation Program updates by subscribing to our email list. Search "NIP updates" on the Department's website www.health.gov.au.

Please share this information with those in your networks and practices who administer or prescribe vaccines.

Thank you for your continuing support in delivering this important vaccination program

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Murphy', written in a cursive style.

Dr Brendan Murphy