



Vaccine Update 482 – 2026 WA Influenza Immunisation Program Launch

It is important to read this statement in conjunction with the [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#) and the [ATAGI Statement on the administration of seasonal influenza vaccines in 2026](#)

Key Messages

- The 2026 WA Influenza Immunisation Program commenced today.
- Annual vaccination is the most important measure to prevent influenza and its complications. Influenza vaccination is recommended for all persons aged ≥ 6 months.
- The importance of influenza vaccination should be emphasised. Healthcare provider recommendation is the strongest predictor of a person's decision to vaccinate. Last year, the influenza season was unusually severe and vulnerable cohorts remained under vaccinated.
- The 2026 WA Influenza Nasal Spray Vaccination Program will offer an intranasally administered live-attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV), FluMist, delivered to children aged 2-11 years.
- Inactivated influenza vaccines (IIV) remain available for children who are not eligible for LAIV.
- All influenza vaccines, including LAIV, can be co-administered with other vaccines. *Refer to the Australian Immunisation Handbook.*
- For adults aged ≥ 65 years, the adjuvanted Fludac vaccine is preferentially recommended over standard influenza vaccine. This product is not licenced or recommended for anyone aged < 65 years.
- The 2026 Free Influenza Vaccine Program will run from 1 May to 30 June 2026. People aged 12 to 64 years, including travellers and people without Medicare cards are eligible to receive a free influenza vaccine from participating providers.
- People vaccinated with a 2025 formulation influenza vaccine in late 2025 or early 2026, are still recommended to receive the 2026 formulation.
- All influenza vaccinations must be recorded on [the Australian Immunisation Register \(AIR\)](#) either via practice management software, if this is available to you, or directly by logging into the AIR site via your Provider Digital Access (PRODA).

- Providers are highly recommended to review the 2026 Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) [Statement on the administration of seasonal influenza vaccines](#).

Eligibility for government-funded influenza vaccines

Annual influenza vaccination is funded for the following cohorts under the NIP and WA funded programs:

- All Aboriginal people aged 6 months and over.
- Children aged from 6 months to Year 6 age equivalent.
- People aged 6 months or over who have medical conditions such as:
 - heart disease
 - kidney disease
 - chronic respiratory conditions
 - chronic illnesses that required regular medical attention or hospitalisation in the previous year
 - chronic neurological conditions
 - immunocompromising conditions
 - haematological disorders
 - diabetes and other metabolic disorders
 - children aged 6 months to 10 years receiving long-term aspirin therapy.
- Pregnant people
 - Recommended during every pregnancy, at any stage of pregnancy.
 - For those who received an influenza vaccine before becoming pregnant or during 2025, revaccination with the 2026 influenza vaccine is recommended during pregnancy to maximise the protection of the mother and the infant during the first six months of life.
 - Influenza vaccine can be safely given at the same time as a pertussis vaccine, RSV vaccine and/or COVID-19 vaccine.
- Adults aged ≥65 years
- Vulnerable people aged 12 to 64 years, including people experiencing housing instability and residents in congregate living settings, such as residential aged care, disability care, mental health hostels and youth group houses, who are not otherwise eligible for a NIP vaccine.

Eligibility for government-funded influenza vaccines is listed on the [WA Immunisation Schedule](#) and the [WA Aboriginal Immunisation Schedule](#).

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Refer to the influenza chapter in the [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#) for detailed advice, vaccine dosage, and contraindications.

Vaccine brands

The table below summarises government-funded vaccine brands available for each cohort.

2026 Government-funded influenza vaccines available in WA

Cohort	Program	Brand				
		Vaxigrip	FluMist	Fluzone	Flucelvax	Fluad
All children 6 months to < 5 years	NIP	Yes				
All children 2 to 11 years	State		Yes			
All primary school children 5 to 11 years	State			Yes		
Medically at-risk persons 5 to <65 years	NIP	Yes			Yes	
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander persons 5 to <65 years	NIP	Yes			Yes	
Pregnancy	NIP	Yes			Yes	
Persons 12 to <65 years not medically at risk (free flu May to June)	State			Yes		
Persons experiencing homelessness or congregate living 12 to <65 years	State			Yes		
All adults 65 years and older	NIP					Yes
HCW WA Staff	State			Yes	Yes	

Timing of vaccination

- ATAGI advises that annual vaccination should ideally occur before the onset of each influenza season when vaccines become available.
- While protection is generally expected to last the whole year, the highest level of protection against influenza occurs in the first 3 to 4 months following vaccination.
- In WA, the peak period for influenza transmission is typically June to September, and vaccination programs are timed to ensure maximum effectiveness across the whole season.

Ordering and storage of vaccines

- In 2026, initial supply of FluMist intranasal influenza vaccines to providers will be done by pre-allocating the number of doses. Following this, ordering of FluMist through Onelink will commence from mid-April.

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- All other government-funded influenza vaccines are available to order through [Onelink](#) once they arrive in the WA warehouse.
- Weekly ordering will be available for the first few weeks of the program to help providers manage clinics and storage. Check your 'Order History' in the Onelink portal for the date of your last order; you can order again 7 days from that date.
- Due to increased distribution of vaccines during this time, it can take between 1 to 7 days for you to receive your order.
- Providers should review their storage capacity for influenza vaccines and determine if additional storage needs to be arranged. Vaccines should be stored in accordance with the [National Vaccine Storage Guidelines 'Strive for 5'](#). This includes ensuring that all vaccines remain in their original packaging to protect from light.
- It is anticipated there will be sufficient quantities of vaccine for all people eligible for a government-funded influenza vaccination in WA.

Vaccine wastage and cold chain management

- All 2025 influenza vaccines have now expired and must be recorded as [wastage](#) and disposed of immediately to avoid vaccine administration errors.
- **Please note the 15-week expiry date of FluMist vaccines written on the packaging.** The first doses that are distributed expire on 10 July 2026.
- As a condition of receiving government-funded vaccines, providers must follow the Management of Cold Chain for Immunisation Service Providers guidelines, available on the Department of Health [Cold Chain Management](#) webpage, and participate in a cold chain audit when requested.
- In the event of a cold chain breach of government-funded vaccines, providers must follow the reporting process as described in section 5.1 of the Management of [Cold Chain for Immunisation Service Providers guidelines](#).

Resources for providers

As a health care professional, your strong recommendation is a critical factor in whether your patients get an influenza vaccine. The [Sharing Knowledge About Immunisation website](#) hosts resources for health professionals including conversation guides, eLearning modules, videos and fact sheets.

The National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS) has developed a [suite of resources](#) for the 2026 influenza vaccination program.

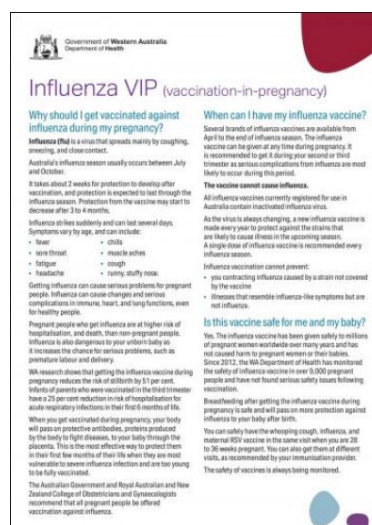
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You are recommended to promote influenza immunisation in your practice by downloading and displaying materials from the toolkit. You can also visit the Department of Health [Quickmail](#) online ordering site to order the below hardcopy resources for your practice.

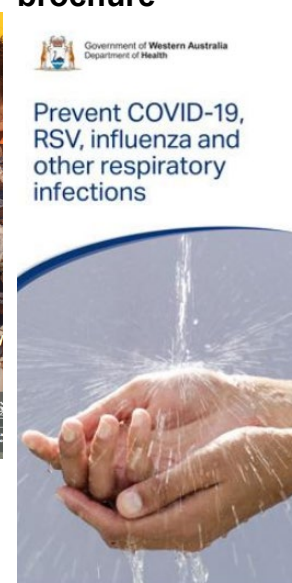
Influenza VIP (Vaccination in Pregnancy)



Aboriginal influenza immunisation brochure



Prevent COVID-19, RSV, Influenza and other respiratory infections brochure



WA Department of Health 2026 Immunisation education modules now available

The **WA Immunisation Update module** and the **Influenza module** have been updated by the WA Department of Health to support immunisation providers in maintaining current knowledge and best practice in accordance with contemporary immunisation recommendations.

Both modules are now finalised for 2026 and are available for providers to access and complete.

Registration for these modules can be completed [here](#).

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Scroll down to the 'Access education modules' accordion and follow the link to register. Please note, you may need to re-register if you are a returning student.

Please note that, the content from the Shingles module and the Public Health Perspective module has been incorporated into the Immunisation Update module to achieve a more comprehensive learning experience. These modules will no longer be available as standalone education modules.

2026 WA Health Influenza Immunisation Program Update

The 2026 Influenza Update was held at the WA Department of Health on today. The session provided an overview of the influenza virus and program details. The session recording and slides will be available on the [Immunisation Education webpage](#) in the coming weeks. A Vaccine Update email will be sent once the recording is available.

Changes to the pharmacist SASA

In 2026, the administration of vaccines by pharmacists SASA was expanded to include influenza immunisation for children 2 years of age and over. The purpose of the expansion is to increase access to influenza immunisation for children within the community.

Keep up to date with current information

- Visit and direct consumers to [Influenza \(flu\) immunisation \(healthywa.wa.gov.au\)](https://healthywa.wa.gov.au).
- Refer to the Australian Government's influenza vaccination [program advice for health professionals](#).

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to protecting Western Australians from influenza.

Palee Holdsworth

**A/MANAGER, IMMUNISATION PROGRAM
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

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