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Communicable Diseases Prevention Unit

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| Date: 02/04/2020 | No. of pages (incl. this page): 2 | Phone: 1800 671 738 | Fax: 6173 0821 |
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Update to the 2020 Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Ordering and Information

Planning for influenza vaccine delivery in 2020

- **Vaccine is now available to be ordered through the online ordering system. Please remember that our vaccine distribution warehouse is located in Victoria. Orders normally take three to five days to be delivered, however during peak periods this may take longer. We also ask you to take into consideration logistical challenges such as reduced staffing and social distancing regulations within the TOLL warehouse due to the COVID-19 pandemic.**
- There will be additional logistical challenges in giving influenza vaccines in 2020. In the meantime, please progress your planning for vaccine delivery, giving consideration to social distancing guidelines. A factsheet giving further advice will be available and circulated very shortly.
- NIP vaccines are for high risk groups as per ATAGI guidelines.
- **For non-NIP influenza vaccines, please prioritise health care workers, particularly those working in an aged care setting; and any client who will be visiting residential aged care facilities. Anyone entering a residential aged care facility must receive the 2020 influenza vaccination by 1 May 2020.**
- Stocks of each vaccine brand are finite.
- The Australian Government Chief Medical Officer recently wrote to medical practitioners with early advice on the 2020 National Immunisation Program (NIP) influenza vaccines. The key changes for 2020 are:
 - All people aged 6 months to less than 5 years will be eligible for free influenza vaccines under the NIP in 2020. Please review the processes in your clinic to ensure all children in this age group are offered free vaccines.
 - There are no longer any 0.25mL doses for children. All vaccines are 0.5mL
 - All influenza vaccines on the NIP in 2020 are quadrivalent.
 - People aged 65 years and older will be offered an adjuvanted Quadrivalent Influenza Vaccine (QIV) *Fluad® Quad* (Seqirus).
- There are four age-specific quadrivalent (QIV) NIP influenza vaccines available for eligible people under the age of 65 years. These are:
 - *FluQuadri®* and *Fluarix Tetra®* should be prioritised for NIP-eligible medically at-risk patients but can be given from 6 months of age

- *Vaxigrip Tetra*® (Sanofi) should be prioritised for the universal 6 month to 5 year program but can be used for people from 6 months of age.
- *Afluria Quad* (Seqirus) for people aged 5 years and older
- NB. Non-adjuvanted QIV should be used in people aged 65 years and over only if *Fluad*® *Quad* is not available.

Vaccine timing

- Influenza vaccine is typically recommended to be given from mid-April, to ensure optimal protection at the expected peak of influenza season (August/September).
- However, in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic is presenting additional logistic challenges and influenza vaccine should be given as soon as it is available (from April onwards).
- There is no evidence for the effectiveness or safety of giving two influenza vaccines in one season, except in very specific circumstances (e.g. in children under 9 years receiving vaccine for the first time, and post-transplant). Giving a 'booster' dose later in the season is not currently recommended.

Vaccinations during pregnancy

- Influenza vaccine is recommended as a routine part of standard antenatal care. It can be safely given at any stage during pregnancy and is best given prior to influenza season.
- Pertussis vaccination is recommended between 20 and 32 weeks gestation (mid 2nd trimester to early 3rd trimester) in each pregnancy.
- Videos and brochures for patients are available here <https://beta.health.gov.au/news-and-events/news/influenza-and-pertussis-whooping-cough-vaccination-in-pregnancy>

Reporting requirements

- Please ensure all vaccines are uploaded to the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR). Further information can be found at www.humanservices.gov.au/organisations/health-professionals/services/medicare/australian-immunisation-register-health-professionals
- All serious and/or unexpected adverse events following immunisation (AEFI) must be reported to the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) at: www.tga.gov.au/

Further information and resources

- Our Influenza Immunisation Provider Toolkit, updated Fact Sheets, Influenza schedule and weekly updates of influenza notifications, will be available shortly at www.flu.tas.gov.au.
- ATAGI seasonal influenza vaccine statement 2020: <https://www.health.gov.au/news/clinical-update-2020-seasonal-influenza-vaccines-early-advice-for-vaccination-providers>
- National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS) influenza fact sheet http://ncirs.org.au/sites/default/files/2020-03/Influenza-fact-sheet_March%202020_Final_0.pdf
- Australian Government Department of Health information: <https://beta.health.gov.au/health-topics/immunisation>
- Weekly influenza vaccine safety surveillance updates are available on the AusVaxSafety website at: www.ausvaxsafety.org.au
- An Immunisation update webinar, including some information about influenza vaccines in 2020, was held by Primary Health Tasmania on 24 March 2020 and is available through Health Pathways.

Dr Julie Graham Senior Medical Advisor Health Protection

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