

# FluMist Product Guide

## Influenza and vaccination

In Australia, influenza hospitalisation rates are highest among **older adults and children under 5 years**, including those without pre-existing conditions.<sup>1</sup>

In 2025, **only 25.7% of children aged under 5 years were vaccinated against influenza** – a rapidly declining rate leaving many vulnerable.<sup>2</sup>

**Vaccination remains the cornerstone of influenza prevention.** Benefits of vaccination go beyond direct protection against circulating influenza strains and include<sup>3</sup>:

Reduces risk of severe illness, complications, and hospitalisation in children.

Contributes to herd immunity, protecting vulnerable populations who cannot be vaccinated.

Reduces absenteeism from school and childcare, supporting better attendance and learning outcomes.

Helps to decrease parental time off work associated with caring for sick children.

## FluMist live-attenuated influenza vaccine

*FluMist* is a live-attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV) delivered via nasal spray. As *FluMist* avoids injections and is more convenient, it can improve vaccine access and uptake, especially in needle averse populations or those who have difficulty accessing healthcare professionals.

**In Australia, *FluMist* is TGA approved for the prevention of influenza in children aged 2 to less than 18 years.**<sup>4</sup>

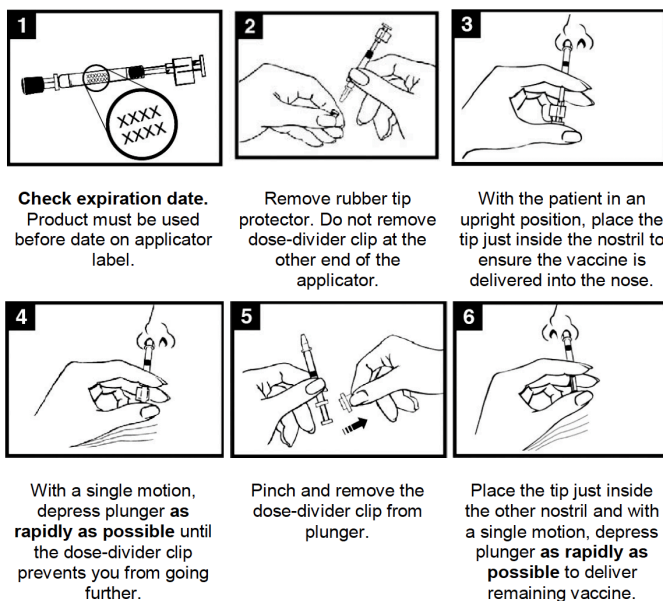
Children aged 24 months to <9 years **with a medical risk condition** who are receiving an influenza vaccine for the first time should receive **two doses** given at least **four weeks apart**. Those who have previously been vaccinated require only **one dose**. All other children should only receive a **single dose**.<sup>4</sup>

*FluMist* has demonstrated similar efficacy to injectable influenza vaccine against any influenza in pediatric population.<sup>5</sup>

## Who should not receive the *FluMist* vaccine<sup>4</sup>

- children under 2 years of age (increased risk of hospitalisation and wheezing)
- adults 18 years and older (outside the approved age range)
- children and adolescents who have a severe allergy to eggs or other vaccine components
- children who have an allergy to gentamicin (a trace residual in the *FluMist*)
- children and adolescents under 18 years receiving long-term aspirin or salicylate therapy (risk of Reye's syndrome with salicylates and wild-type influenza infection)
- children with severe asthma or current wheezing (precaution)
- clinically immunocompromised children or adolescents or those on immunosuppressive therapy
- not recommended in pregnancy and lactation (insufficient safety data)

## Administration<sup>4</sup>



For a step-by-step video on how to administer *FluMist*, please scan the QR code.



In most cases, pharmacists can administer *FluMist* without a prescription. Some states have funded *FluMist* as part of influenza vaccination programs. To check eligibility, consult with the immunisation branch in your state or territory health department.

The vaccine must be administered by the pharmacist and not given to the consumer, parent or carer to be administered at home.

Pharmacists must maintain professional indemnity insurance, comply with reporting requirements (e.g. Australian Immunisation Register), and ensure emergency response protocols are in place (including access to adrenaline for anaphylaxis).

## Post-vaccination observation

As per ATAGI, all patients should remain in the pharmacy or vaccination setting for at least 15 minutes after influenza vaccination.<sup>6</sup> This allows for prompt recognition and management of any immediate adverse events, such as syncope or anaphylaxis.

## Timing of vaccination

The influenza vaccine should be administered annually before the onset of each influenza season, which in Australia is typically from June to September. Vaccination should continue to be offered at any time throughout the year as long as influenza viruses are circulating and there is a valid vaccine available.<sup>7</sup>

## Situations when *FluMist* administration should be delayed<sup>4</sup>

moderate or severe acute illness (with or without fever) – vaccination should be postponed until recovery, to avoid confusion between illness symptoms and vaccine side effects.

children and adolescents with active wheezing at the time of presentation

children and adolescents presenting with nasal congestion (may limit deliver)

LAIV can be given at the same time as, or at any interval before or after other currently used vaccines, including live vaccines.<sup>6</sup>

## Co-administration with other vaccinations

*FluMist* may be given at the same time as other vaccines. Concurrent administration of *FluMist* with the MMR vaccine, MMR and varicella vaccine and the oral poliovirus vaccine have been studied, showing no clinically meaningful changes in immune responses to measles, mumps, rubella, varicella, poliovirus or influenza.<sup>4</sup>

## Potential side effects

Mild, self-limiting side effects are common and should be discussed with parents and carers to avoid unnecessary concern, these may include<sup>6</sup>

- runny or stuffy nose
- mild sore throat
- headache
- low grade fever

Serious adverse events are rare but should be recognised and acted upon promptly. These include<sup>6</sup>:

- persistent high fever
- difficulty breathing
- wheezing
- allergic reaction

*FluMist* is generally well tolerated.

*Flumist* has been available in the northern hemisphere for over 20 years and TGA registered since 2016. Consumers can be reassured that the vaccine has extensive safety data from its previous overseas use.

## Storage

Ensure the vaccine is kept at +2°C to +8°C at all times, must not be frozen and must remain in the carton until use to protect from light.<sup>4</sup> In the event of a cold chain breach, *FluMist* can tolerate a single temperature excursion up to 25°C for a maximum of 12 hours.<sup>4</sup> Pharmacists must follow the 'National vaccine storage guidelines: Strive for 5'.<sup>8</sup>

Want to learn more? Scan the QR code to access PSA's online module, Novel influenza prevention for children



Supported by an unrestricted educational grant by AstraZeneca

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