



WINTER PREPAREDNESS 2026

The combination of Influenza and COVID-19 can be life threatening, especially for vulnerable people. Vaccination against both is critical for people to not only protect themselves, but to reduce the risk of spread to others.

Influenza vaccines can be given at the same time as others, including diphtheria (dTpa), respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), pneumococcal and COVID-19. For more information see the [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#).

The flu vaccine is free to eligible groups through the National Immunisation Program (NIP), including:

- all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged six months and older
- pregnant women during any stage of pregnancy
- all people aged 65 years and older
- people aged six months and over with medical conditions that may increase the risk of complications from severe influenza
- children aged six months to less than five years.

2026 influenza vaccination program advice

- For adults aged 65 years and older, both NIP funded adjuvanted vaccine (Fluad®) and the private market high-dose influenza vaccine (Fluzone High-Dose) are equally preferentially recommended over standard influenza vaccines.
- Flucelvax®, a cell-based vaccine, is NIP funded for people aged five to 64 years old with medical conditions that put them at an increased risk of complications from influenza. There is no preferential recommendation between Flucelvax® and standard dose egg-based influenza vaccines.
- In 2026, the intranasally administered live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV) will be available for the first time in Australia for children aged two to 17 years old by private prescription and through state-based immunisation programs in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia.
- Influenza vaccines can be co-administered with other vaccines.

To learn more, access the following resources via NCIRS:

- [Comparing the inactivated influenza vaccine with the live attenuated vaccine](#)
- [Table summarising state and territory funding for intranasal flu vaccine in 2026](#)
- [Influenza vaccines – frequently asked questions \(FAQs\)](#)

NIP funded trivalent influenza vaccines (TIVs) by age group

Age group	Fluad® 0.50 mL (CSL Seqirus)	Flucelvax® 0.50 mL (CSL Seqirus)	Vaxigrip® 0.50 mL (Sanofi)
6 months to <5 years	DO NOT USE	NOT FUNDED	✓
≥5 to <60 years	DO NOT USE	✓*	✓*
≥60 to <65 years	DO NOT USE	✓*	✓*
≥65 years	✓	NOT FUNDED	NOT FUNDED

Note: Ticks indicate vaccines that are NIP funded. Asterisks (*) indicate funding only for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, pregnant women and people who have certain medical conditions. Other influenza vaccines that are not NIP-funded are available in 2026. For further information, refer to the ATAGI clinical statement on the administration of influenza vaccines in 2026 available at health.gov.au/influenza-resources and the Australian Immunisation Handbook chapter – [Influenza \(Flu\)](#).

Table 1. Seasonal influenza vaccines registered and available for use in Australia in 2026, by age

Registered age group	Vaxigrip 0.5 mL (Sanofi)	Flucelvax 0.5 mL (CSL Seqirus)	Fluzone 0.5 mL (Sanofi)	Influvac 0.5 mL (Viatrix)	Fluad 0.5 mL (CSL Seqirus)	Fluzone High-Dose 0.5 mL (Sanofi)	Flumist 0.2 mL (AstraZeneca)
6 months to <2 years	✓#	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X
≥2 to <5 years	✓#	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓
≥5 to <18 years	✓**	✓**	✓	✓	X	X	✓
≥18 to <50 years	✓**	✓**	✓	✓	X	X	X
≥50 to <60 years	✓**	✓**	✓	✓	✓	X	X
≥60 to <65 years	✓**	✓**	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
≥65 years	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓#	✓	X

Ticks indicate age at which a vaccine is registered and available. Hashtags indicate availability for free under the NIP.

* NIP funding only for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, pregnant women and people who have certain medical conditions.

Vaccine supply

Use your Onelink account to order seasonal influenza vaccines online. The department will advise government vaccine account holders when ordering begins. The department will allow weekly ordering during April, May and June 2026 to assist in managing the NIP influenza program. Orders must be separated by seven days. Orders should be combined into one for influenza and all other government funded vaccines – refraining from placing another order until the previous one has been delivered. Aim to have no more than a month's stock in your vaccine refrigerator to reduce the risk of stock loss through cold chain breaches or expiry before use. Order limits may be restricted to assist with equitable and timely distribution of vaccines.

AIR

All influenza vaccines are required to be recorded on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR). Ensure you use the correct brand name, dose and batch number. Report to AIR using the [antenatal indicator](#) for vaccine given in pregnancy. For health professional resources on accessing AIR, go to: <https://hpe.servicesaustralia.gov.au/australian-immunisation-register.html>

COVID-19 recommendations

Booster doses

	< 5 years	5 to 17 years	18 to 64 years	65 to 74 years	≥ 75 years
Without severe immunocompromise	Not recommended	Not recommended	Eligible for a dose every 12 months ²	Recommended every 12 months and eligible for a dose every 6 months ⁴ .	Recommended every 6 months.
With severe immunocompromise	Not recommended	Eligible for a dose every 12 months ²	Recommended every 12 months and eligible for a dose every 6 months ³		

Notes:

1. Monovalent Omicron XBB.1.5 vaccines are preferred; for ages in which a monovalent XBB.1.5-containing vaccine is not available, use other vaccines approved for that age group.
2. Consider dose based on an individual risk benefit assessment with an immunisation provider.
3. People with severe immunocompromise, who are aged between 18 to 64 years, are recommended a dose every 12-months and are eligible for a dose every six months based on an individual risk-benefit assessment. Refer to the Australian Immunisation Handbook for further information.
4. People aged between 65 and 74 years are recommended a dose every 12-months and are eligible for a dose every 6 months based on an individual risk-benefit assessment. Refer to the Australian Immunisation Handbook for further information.

Primary course

	6 months to 5 years	5 years to <18	18 years and older
Without risk factors	Not eligible		Recommended a single primary dose.
With risk factors ²	Eligible for 2 primary doses and eligible for a 3 rd primary dose ³ .	Eligible for a single primary dose ³ .	
With severe Immunocompromise	Recommended 2 primary doses and eligible for a 3 rd dose ⁴ .		

Notes:

1. Monovalent Omicron XBB.1.5 vaccines are preferred; for ages in which a monovalent XBB.1.5-containing vaccine is not available, use other vaccines approved for that age group.
2. Includes those with a medical condition that increases the risk of severe COVID-19 illness (refer to Australian Immunisation Handbook) or those with disability with significant or complex health needs or multiple comorbidities which increase the risk of poor outcomes from COVID-19.
3. Consider dose based on an individual risk benefit assessment with an immunisation provider.
4. People with severe immunocompromise, who are older than six months of age, are recommended two primary doses and are eligible for a third primary dose based on an individual risk-benefit assessment. Refer to the Australian Immunisation Handbook for further information.

For more, go to: COVID Vaccination Advice and Recommendations Department of Health, Ageing and Disability

Pneumococcal

Pneumococcal disease is a bacterial infection, that is especially serious for young children and older people. It can cause pneumonia, bloodstream infection and meningitis (inflammation of the membranes around the brain). The Australian Immunisation Handbook recommends pneumococcal vaccination for specific groups including:

- routine vaccination in infants and children
- non-Indigenous adults aged 70 years and older
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults aged 50 years and older
- children, adolescents and adults with risk conditions for pneumococcal disease.

The optimal pneumococcal vaccination program for adults (aged 18 years) in Australia is currently under review. For more information, go to: [Pneumococcal vaccination for all Australian program](#)

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

RSV is a common virus that infects the airways and lungs. It is highly contagious and spreads easily if an infected person produces small water droplets while talking, coughing and sneezing.

Regular handwashing and good personal hygiene help stop the spread and the main treatment for RSV infection is rest and plenty of fluids.

For information about prevention, symptoms, diagnosis and treatment, [see healthdirect's RSV page](#)

[The Respiratory Syncytial Virus Mother and Infant Protection Program \(RSV-MIPP\)](#) is available for pregnant women and eligible infants in 2026 for the prevention of RSV associated lower respiratory tract disease.

The maternal RSV vaccine (Abrysvo®) is available year round under the [National immunisation Program](#) (NIP) for all pregnant women (including those aged <18 years) to protect their infant. It is recommended in each pregnancy from 28 weeks gestation.

The Victorian Government-funded infant RSV monoclonal antibody Beyfortus™ (nirsevimab) immunisation program will be available from mid-March to 30 September 2026.

Eligibility includes:

Newborn infants (birth dose) and infants up to eight months of age who:

- were born to mothers who did not receive the RSV vaccine during pregnancy, or
- were born less than two weeks after maternal RSV vaccination, or
- have medical conditions that increase the risk of severe RSV disease, as outlined in the [Australian immunisation Handbook](#), regardless of maternal vaccination status.

Infants and young children from eight months to 24 months of age who:

- are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait islander, or
- have specific medical conditions that increase the risk of severe RSV.

For clinical guidance, decision aids (newborn and infants), checklists, consent form, fact sheet tool kit and posters refer to the department's [RSV immunisation resources](#) and [Respiratory Syncytial Virus \(RSV\) chapter of the Australian Immunisation Handbook](#).

Online ordering for Beyfortus™ (nirsevimab) via Onelink opened on Monday 16 March 2026. Providers are advised to continue monitoring their Onelink ordering template for more information including order limits.

Vaccination campaign

Murray PHN's 'Avoid double trouble' vaccination campaign encourages people to get vaccinated against the flu and COVID-19. Download materials for free:

- [Social media tile](#)
- [Digital A4 flyer/](#)

Murray HealthPathways

- [Influenza](#)
- [Immuneisation – Influenza](#)
- [Immuneisation Suite](#)
- [Child - Respiratory Suite](#)
- [Adult Respiratory Suite](#)
- [COVID-19 Suite.](#)

To learn more and request free access, visit: murrayphn.org.au/healthpathways/

Immuneisation education

- [COVID-19 Vaccination training program](#)
- Melbourne Vaccine Education Centre: [Use of Multidose vials](#)
- Victorian Department of Health: [Cold Chain Management eLearning modules](#)

For more, visit the [Victorian Immuneisation Learning Hub](#)

Influenza resources

- Australian Department of Health: [Information about influenza vaccines](#)
- ATAGI: [Statement on the administration of seasonal influenza vaccines in 2026](#)
- [Influenza chapter in the Australian immuneisation Handbook](#)
- [2026 Influenza Vaccination Program Toolkit](#)
- [Better Health Channel Influenza](#)
- [Better Health Channel Influenza - Immuneisation](#)
- [Better Health Channel Don't Risk the Flu. Get vaccinated today campaign](#)
- [Getting Vaccinated against influenza- resource collection](#)
- [Maternal Vaccinations consumer brochure](#)
- [Why does my child need a flu shot? – Fact sheet](#)
- [Ask about the flu vaccine today – eligibility through the National Immuneisation Program \(poster\)](#)
- [Flu in pregnancy \(poster\)](#)
- [Flu vaccination \(poster\)](#)
- [Influenza campaign- Passed around – 15 seconds \(Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People\)](#)
- [National Immuneisation Program Schedule](#)
- Murray PHN Focus On [Immuneisation and winter wellness](#)
- RACGP: [immuneisation resources and posters](#)
- Victorian Department of Health: [Immuneisation Victoria newsletter subscription](#); [Seasonal Influenza vaccine information](#) and [Stay Well This Winter Campaign Toolkit](#)
- NSW Health: [Seasonal influenza vaccine and ordering processes](#)
- [Webinar – Influenza Vaccination in 2026: a new era of protection](#)
- [SKAI communication package – Conversations with parents and pregnant women around influenza vaccination](#)
- [Supporting conversations about vaccination with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families](#)
- [Example of a supporting flu vaccine yarn](#)
- [Flu vaccine information sheet for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people](#)
- [Summary table of flu and COVID-19 vaccination resources](#)

Avoiding shoulder injury related to vaccine administration

- Melbourne Vaccine Education Centre: [Shoulder Injury Related to Vaccine Administration \(SIRVA\)](#) and (MVEC) [Vaccine Administration](#) - Correct injection technique and anatomical sites
- [National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance \(NCIRS\) SIRVA Webinar](#)

Chronic airway management in the winter months

National Asthma Council Australia:

- [Asthma Asthma Action Plan \(colour\)](#)
- [Asthma Asthma Action Plan \(black & white\)](#)
- [NAC Asthma Action Plan \(writable*\)](#)
- [Written Asthma Action Plan \(RTF version\)](#)
- [Health Professional resources](#)
- [Education and training](#)

Lung Foundation:

- [COPD Action Plan](#)
- [My COPD Checklist](#)
- [COPD The Basics](#)
- [Understanding COPD](#)

For additional support

For more information or support email primarycareresponse@murrayphn.org.au

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