

Expansion of access to JE vaccine in NSW

Information for NSW General Practitioners

Please distribute this information to all staff

Key points for GPs:

1. Japanese encephalitis (JE), a mosquito-borne viral illness, has been detected in NSW.
2. Vaccination is recommended for new groups in some LGAs in Murrumbidgee and Far West Local Health Districts.
3. Limited vaccine doses can be ordered through the State Vaccine Centre for these patients
4. Expanded priority groups include people who live or work in high-risk local government areas and are aged between 50-65 years and work outside for at least 4 hours per workday.

JE Vaccine is now recommended for people who:

- live or work in the following local government areas (LGAs) in southern NSW: Wentworth, Balranald, Murray River, Edward River, Berrigan, Federation, Albury, Greater Hume, and Griffith **AND**
- are aged between 50-65 **AND**
- are employed in an occupation that is largely or totally outdoors (defined as spending at least 4 hours per day outdoors).

As previously recommended, JE vaccine continues to be recommended for:

- People who work at, reside at, or have a planned non-deferable visit to a piggery, including farm workers and their families (including children aged 2 months and older) living at the piggery, pig transport workers, veterinarians (including students and nurses) and others involved in the care of pigs; and Pork abattoir or pork rendering plant.
- People who work directly with mosquitoes through their surveillance (field or laboratory based) or control and management, and indirectly through management of vertebrate mosquito-borne disease surveillance systems (e.g. sentinel animals) such as environmental health officers and workers (urban and remote) and entomologists
- Diagnostic and research laboratory workers who may be exposed to the virus, such as persons working with JEV cultures or mosquitoes with the potential to transmit JEV.

Situation update

Japanese encephalitis virus is transmitted to humans and other animals by the bite of infected mosquitoes. 13 cases of JE were identified in early 2022 in NSW. Most had exposures in the Murrumbidgee LHD or the southern part of Far West NSW. Mosquito bite avoidance should be encouraged.

How to order vaccine

- Practices that require more than 10 doses of Imojev, or any doses of JEspect (for immunocompromised people, pregnant people or very young children) need to arrange a special order (supply dependent) by contacting the local public health unit on 1300 066 055.
- Patients in recommended priority vaccination groups should not be charged for Government-funded JE vaccine.

At this time, JE is not recommended for other groups, apart from those in the Australian Immunisation Handbook. The Australian Immunisation Handbook provides guidance on dosage, administration, contraindications and precautions (<https://immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au>).

Further information: <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/jevirus>