

FREE FLU VACCINE FOR UNDER FIVES

GPs, AMSS, Community Health, Paediatricians,
Children's Hospitals

Please distribute this information to all doctors,
nurses and staff in your practice



H18/4157

1. **Free quadrivalent influenza vaccine (QIV) will be available for ALL children aged from 6 months to under 5 years of age in NSW from April 2018.**
2. **Before administering a flu vaccine, check you have the correct vaccine for the child's age.**
3. **Only FluQuadri™ Junior should be used for children aged 6-35 months.**

The NSW Government will be providing free influenza vaccines for all children aged from 6 months to under 5 years for the 2018 influenza season

- Infants and children aged under 5 years are at increased risk of influenza infection and hospitalisation. Influenza in this age-group also contributes significantly to influenza transmission in the community.
- Free influenza vaccines will be available for all children aged from 6 months to less than 5 years, including a second dose if indicated.
- The National Immunisation Program continues to provide free influenza vaccines for Aboriginal children aged 6 months to under 5 years and for children aged 6 months and over with medical conditions predisposing to severe influenza.

Vaccine availability

- **The influenza vaccines are expected to be available from April 2018.**
- The two QIVs purchased by NSW for children less than five years of age will cover two A strains of influenza (H1N1/Michigan and H3N2/Singapore) and two B strains of influenza (Brisbane and Phuket):
 - **FluQuadri Junior®** (Sanofi Pasteur) for **children from six months to 35 months of age**
 - **FluQuadri®** (Sanofi Pasteur) for children **aged from three years**
- The A/H3N2 component of the vaccine has been updated in the 2018 vaccines to provide better protection than previous vaccines against this important strain.

Recommendations for children

- Two doses of influenza vaccine at least four weeks apart are recommended for eligible children aged from 6 months to under 5 years who are receiving influenza vaccine for the first time.
- Only use **FluQuadri™ Junior** for children 6 months to 35 months of age.
- **DO NOT ADMINISTER A HALF DOSE** of FluQuadri® to children aged 6-35 months as this vaccine is not licensed for this use.
- Ensure your practice software is up to date so that all vaccine doses administered to children and adults are reported to the Australian Immunisation Register.
- Further information on the 2018 influenza vaccination program will be faxed to you shortly and available from www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/

Ordering influenza vaccine

- You will be able to order influenza vaccine online at: <https://nsw.tollhealthcare.com/> from 12 February.
- **Deliveries of influenza vaccine will commence when vaccine becomes available in April 2018.**
- Ring the State Vaccine Centre on 1300 656 132 if you have not already registered for online ordering.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V. Sheppeard'.

Dr Vicky Sheppeard

Director, Communicable Diseases
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