

Immunisation Program Update

Issue No. 21 | April 2021

From the Manager

With the COVID-19 vaccination program dominating activity it has been several months since the last Immunisation Program Update. Even with all the attention on COVID-19 vaccines, the usual annual influenza vaccination program is underway this month. We have included information and resources about influenza vaccines and the COVID-19 vaccines on page 2. All immunisation providers and their staff are strongly encouraged to take some time to make themselves aware of this information.

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has released new safety advice about Zostavax®. Zostavax® is a live vaccine that offers protection against herpes zoster. The TGA has updated their clinical advice following three serious adverse events after administration of Zostavax® to people on immunosuppressing medication. The advice can be found on page 4. A specific Zostavax® pre-vaccination checklist is also available for providers to use.

The Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) continues to undergo change. As a whole-of-life register, AIR has been a key feature of the immunisation landscape since October 2016, and now with the advent of COVID-19 vaccines, it has become even more important. Evidence of COVID-19 vaccination status could become necessary for various purposes and therefore reporting COVID-19 vaccinations (and influenza vaccinations) to AIR is now mandatory.

Feedback or suggestions about The Update can be provided to immunisation@health.qld.gov.au.

Kind regards

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Acting Manager, Immunisation Program

In this issue

From the Manager	1
Influenza Vaccination Program	2
COVID-19 Vaccination Program – important websites	2
Zostavax® safety alert	4
Zostavax® & MMR11® - change in presentation	4
Australian Immunisation Handbook – App available	5
Mandatory reporting to the Australian Immunisation Register	5
Additional vaccines for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander children	6
Immunisation fact sheets in various language	7
Responding to vaccine delivery issues	8

Influenza Vaccination Program 2021

The annual Influenza Vaccination Program is underway. Information about the program has been distributed to all immunisation providers. If you have not received copies of the resources shown below, please contact your local Public Health Unit.

Refer to the following guidelines from the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) for detailed information:

- [ATAGI advice on seasonal influenza vaccines 2021](#)
- [ATAGI statement on the administration of seasonal influenza vaccines 2021](#)
- [ATAGI advice on the relative timing of administering influenza and COVID-19 vaccines in 2021 Version 2.0](#)

Dates for vaccine distribution

- Between Monday 29 March to Friday 9 April – only Fludax® Quad will be distributed
- From 12 April – Fluarix Tetra®, Vaxigrip Tetra® and Fludax® Quad can be ordered

Please note: Afluria Quad® will be available later in the program.

Visit [Queensland Health's Immunisation website](#) for information about ordering vaccines, including influenza.

Queensland Health

Influenza Immunisation Program

Program Advice March 2021

(eligibility and vaccines)

Report all influenza vaccinations to the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR)

6 months to less than 5 years

Vaxigrip Tetra® OR Fluarix Tetra®

- ALL children aged 6 months to <5 years
- Give two doses one month apart if this is the first year of receiving influenza vaccine



* Funded only for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people who have certain medical conditions.

5 to 64 years

Vaxigrip Tetra® OR Fluarix Tetra® OR Afluria Quad®

- ALL Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 5 to <65 years
- Individuals with medical conditions predisposing them to severe influenza
- ALL pregnant women at any stage of pregnancy
- Give two doses one month apart for children aged <9 years if this is the first year of receiving influenza vaccine



65 years and over

Fludax Quad®

- ALL individuals aged 65 years and over

DO NOT USE THIS VACCINE FOR ANY OTHER AGE GROUP



For further information please refer to the online Australian Immunisation Handbook and the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/atagi-advice-on-influenza-and-covid-19-vaccines> for further information about the recommendations for the National Immunisation Program at <https://immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au/>

Correct at time of printing March 2021. May be subject to change.



Queensland Health

National Influenza Program

March 2021

Important information for the 2021 program

- From 1 March 2021 the Australian Government has mandated that ALL influenza vaccinations administered (both public and private vaccinations) must be Australian Immunisation Register (AIR). All COVID-19 vaccinations must be used in Australia is 14 days. To access the ATAGI advice regarding this go to [health.gov.au/resources/publications/atagi-advice-on-influenza-and-covid-19-vaccines](https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/atagi-advice-on-influenza-and-covid-19-vaccines)
- The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) has advised preferred minimum interval between a seasonal influenza and a COVID-19 vaccine is 14 days. To access the ATAGI advice regarding this go to [health.gov.au/resources/publications/atagi-advice-on-influenza-and-covid-19-vaccines](https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/atagi-advice-on-influenza-and-covid-19-vaccines)
- It is extremely important to check the AIR for a COVID-19 vaccination that has been administered prior to administering influenza vaccine. The following individuals are included in Phase 1a, to receive a COVID-19 vaccination:
 - ☐ Aged care and disability care residents
 - ☐ Quarantine and border workers
 - ☐ Frontline health care worker sub-groups as prioritised

Further information about the COVID-19 vaccination program can be found on Government website: https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines?utm_source=health.gov.au&utm_medium=redirect&utm_campaign=transformation&utm_content=covid19-vaccines

Who is eligible for funded influenza vaccine

- Children aged 6 months to under 5 years
- Pregnant women at any stage of pregnancy
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 6 months and over
- Adults aged 65 years and over
- People aged 6 months and older with medical conditions specified in the conditions associated with an increased risk of influenza disease and severe

The complete list of conditions for funded influenza can be found at: <https://immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au/resources/handbook-tables/list-specified-medical-conditions-associated-with-severe>

2021 National Influenza Program - Important information

When will you receive vaccine and how to place orders

When?	Influenza vaccines available in 2021?	Who should receive this vaccine?
Only one initial delivery of influenza vaccines will be provided by the Immunisation Program and will take approximately 2 weeks commencing 29 March 2021	Fludax Quad®	65 years and over
Weekly orders will commence Monday 12 April 2021	Fludax Quad® Fluarix Tetra® Vaxigrip Tetra® Afluria Quad®	65 years and over 6 months to 64 years 6 months to 64 years 5 years to 64 years

Ordering influenza vaccines

- ☐ You can commence placing weekly influenza orders from Tuesday 12 April 2021
- ☐ If your monthly order is due when placing an influenza order you will be asked to include a stock on hand of your National Immunisation Program vaccines as well as all the influenza vaccines you currently hold
- ☐ Do not book influenza vaccination clinics until you have vaccine in your vaccine refrigerator
- ☐ Please use the current online Vaccine Order Form to order Influenza vaccine https://www.health.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0035/949157/vaccine-order-form.pdf

Influenza vaccine components for 2021

Egg based quadrivalent influenza vaccines:	Cell based quadrivalent influenza vaccines:
an A/Victoria/257/01/2019 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus	an A/Wisconsin/58/2019 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus
an A/Hong Kong/2671/2019 (H3N2)-like virus	an A/Hong Kong/2671/2019 (H3N2)-like virus
a B/Washington/02/2019-like (B/Victoria lineage) virus	a B/Washington/02/2019-like (B/Victoria lineage) virus
a B/Phuket/3073/2013-like (B/Yamagata lineage) virus	a B/Phuket/3073/2013-like (B/Yamagata lineage) virus

Refer to the Therapeutic Goods Administration for further information about the composition of influenza vaccines at <https://www.tga.gov.au/ivc-recommendation-composition-influenza-vaccine-australia-2021>

2021 National Influenza Program - Important information

Page 7

Influenza vaccination and COVID-19 vaccination

There are some people who have already received a COVID-19 vaccination. These could be residents or staff in aged care facilities, quarantine hotel staff, or health care workers. **There must be a 14-day interval between administration of a COVID-19 vaccine and an influenza vaccine.**

Please check a person's immunisation history on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) before vaccinating.

ATAGI has produced specific guidelines on COVID-19 vaccines and influenza vaccines. Refer to page 2 of The Update.

Dosage intervals of COVID-19 vaccines and influenza vaccines

COVID-19 vaccine	Dose 1 given at	Dose 2 given at	Minimum interval between influenza vaccines and COVID-19 vaccines
Pfizer Comirnaty (BNT 162b2)	0	3 weeks	14 days
AstraZeneca	0	12 weeks (<i>minimum 4 weeks apart</i>)	14 days

COVID-19 vaccination program

The COVID-19 Vaccination Program is managed by the Australian Government with support from each State & Territory Government. Queensland Health has established a COVID-19 Vaccination Taskforce which is overseeing the program's rollout in Queensland. However, the vaccination program in some sectors such as aged and disability care are the responsibility of the Australian Government. The COVID-19 Vaccination Program is being run as a stand-alone program and is currently separate to Queensland Health's Immunisation Program.



To keep up to date with the COVID-19 Vaccination Program in Queensland, visit the [COVID-19 vaccine](#) website.

For information from the [Australian Government about the COVID-19 Vaccination Program](#) visit their website.



Zostavax® safety alert

- The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) have issued a **safety alert** for Zostavax®. The vaccine should not be used in people with compromised immune function as it is associated with a risk of mild to serious complications (including death) from infection with the vaccine virus.
- Consumers and health professionals are advised that the TGA has received reports of cases involving adverse events in people on low doses of immunosuppressive medicine.
- One case involving a person, who was on hydroxychloroquine and a low dose of

prednisolone to treat arthritis, died three weeks after receiving Zostavax®.

- The TGA investigation found that Zostavax® was used according to existing recommendations.
- Immunisation providers should be aware of the potential for this very rare adverse event.
- A **Pre-vaccination checklist specific for Zostavax®** is also available.
- Further details about the Zostavax® vaccine safety alert can be found on the **TGA website**.

Zostavax® and MMRII® - change in presentation

The presentation of Zostavax® and MMRII® has changed. The vaccines will be supplied in a single pack and a five (5) pack. The ten (10) packs are currently not being supplied due to global manufacturing changes and providing diluent in a syringe. The formulation of the vaccine and diluent has not changed.

What has changed:

- The presentation will contain two (2) vials – one (1) containing diluent and the second vial containing lyophilised powder.

What hasn't changed:

- Store the vials in their original packaging in a purpose-built vaccine refrigerator at +2°C to +8°C.
- After reconstitution the vaccine should be administered as soon as possible.
- Only use the diluent supplied with the vaccine.
- **Do not freeze either the lyophilised vaccine or the diluent.**

Refer to the **Australian Immunisation Handbook, Preparing for vaccination**.

M-M-R II
RECONSTITUTION USING DILUENT IN A VIAL

To reconstitute the vaccine, use only the diluent supplied since it is free of preservatives or other antiviral substances which might inactivate the vaccine.

M-M-R II is a live vaccine, please review product information and check patient eligibility before prescribing!

Step 1: To reconstitute the vaccine, first withdraw the entire contents of the diluent vial into a syringe.

Step 2: Inject all the diluent in the syringe into the vial of lyophilised vaccine.

Step 3: Gently agitate vial to mix thoroughly.

Step 4: Withdraw the entire contents of the vial containing the reconstituted vaccine into a syringe.

Change the needle and inject reconstituted vaccine as per the See product specific information!

ZOSTAVAX®
RECONSTITUTION USING DILUENT IN A VIAL

To reconstitute the vaccine, use only the diluent supplied since it is free of preservatives or other antiviral substances which might inactivate the vaccine.

ZOSTAVAX® is a live vaccine, please review product information and check patient eligibility before prescribing!

ZOSTAVAX® vaccine screening form for contraindications can be accessed from [here](#).

For subcutaneous administration, Do not inject intravascularly. Reconstitute immediately upon removal from the refrigerator. It is recommended that the vaccine be administered immediately after reconstitution, to minimise loss of potency. Discard reconstituted vaccine if it is not used within 30 minutes. ZOSTAVAX® when reconstituted is a semi-hazy to translucent, off white to pale yellow liquid. *Syringe not provided within packaging. **Caution:** A separate sterile needle and syringe (free of preservatives, antiseptics, and detergents) should be used for administration of ZOSTAVAX® to prevent transfer of infectious disease and vaccine inactivation. **Storage:** Before reconstitution, protect from light. ZOSTAVAX® should be stored refrigerated at an average temperature of 2 to 8°C until it is reconstituted for injection. Do not freeze reconstituted vaccine. The diluent may be stored separately at room temperature (20 to 25°C) or in the refrigerator (2 to 8°C). Do not freeze the diluent. For additional queries, please contact Seqirus Medical Information on 1800 642 865. Refer to the Australian Immunisation Handbook for recommendations for reconstitution guidelines. Consider taking appropriate measures to minimise the risk of needle stick injuries and contamination!

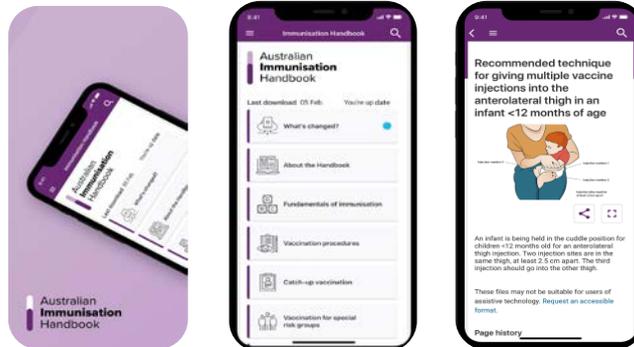
Inject the total volume of reconstituted vaccine as per the following guidelines. See product specific information.

PBS Information: ZOSTAVAX® is listed on the NP for eligible 70 year olds, with a time limited catch-up program for eligible 71-79 year olds. Refer to the NP and PBS Schedules.

Before prescribing, please review Product Information available at www.seqirus.com.au/products

Seqirus
A VACCINE COMPANY

The Australian Immunisation Handbook Now available as a mobile application



Download from either: [Apple App Store](#) OR [Google Play Store](#)

Download Instructions

1. Search for *Immunisation Handbook* in either of the App stores on the device (smartphone or tablet) you wish to add the mobile application to.
2. Select the *Australian Immunisation Handbook* App. Depending on your device, this may have either “Australian Department of Health” or “Medical” as the sub-header.
3. Click the download icon 
4. When the download is finished, you can open the App.
5. The first time you open the App it will take a few minutes to load.



Refer to the online version of the [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#)



Previous hardcopy publications of the *Handbook* should be discarded.

THE AUSTRALIAN IMMUNISATION REGISTER

It is mandatory to report the following vaccinations:

-  From 17 February 2021, all COVID-19 vaccinations
-  From 1 March 2021, all influenza vaccinations
-  From 1 July 2021, all National Immunisation Program vaccinations

Additional vaccines for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

Immunisation providers are reminded that the Australian Immunisation Handbook recommends additional vaccines for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The additional vaccines are recommended in recognition that there are higher rates of some vaccine preventable diseases in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population compared with the non-Indigenous population. Some additional vaccines are available through the National Immunisation Program (NIP) with access varying from state to state, based on local disease burden.

In Queensland, additional vaccines available through the NIP for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are specified in the Immunisation Schedule Queensland. See the two separate schedules with details of vaccines and eligibility i.e. one for 'Adolescents and Adults' and the other for 'Children'.



Immunisation providers are reminded that in accordance with the changes to the NIP introduced on 1 July 2020, the **meningococcal B vaccine (Bexsero®)** was introduced as another additional vaccine for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children with three doses required i.e. at 2, 4 and 12 months of age. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children with medical risk factors require 4 doses i.e. at 2, 4, 6 and 12 months of age. To accommodate the introduction of the meningococcal B vaccine into the childhood immunisation schedule, the **hepatitis A vaccine (Vaqta Paediatric®)** previously scheduled at 12

months of age was moved to the 18 months of age timepoint. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are also recommended to have an additional dose of **pneumococcal vaccine (Prevenar 13®)** at 6 months of age.

Whilst there is often a delay in compliance when changes are made to the immunisation schedule as parents become aware and providers adjust to the changes, recent analysis of AIR data reveals that many children eligible for the meningococcal B vaccine since 1 July 2020 have not yet received it. For more information about meningococcal B vaccination, see the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS) recently published guide: *Meningococcal B vaccination - a guide for healthcare providers | NCIRS*

We strongly recommend that immunisation providers check "Indigenous status" for all children presenting for vaccinations and discuss additional vaccines with parents of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to maximise uptake of these important and potentially life-saving vaccines.



Queensland Health has developed resources to help parents understand the childhood immunisation schedule and the importance of immunisation. Click on [Bubba Jabs resources](#) produced especially for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families are available online.



Immunisation fact sheets & videos in various languages

Following a survey of immunisation providers about the information needs of their clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, the Immunisation Program developed a suite of immunisation resources in many of the languages spoken in Queensland. The decision about which languages was informed by the survey responses, data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics and consultations with key organisations. The list was then refined through consultations with communities and service providers across Queensland. The fact sheets give information about immunisation for children, young adults and seniors.

Visit the Queensland Health website at [Immunisation fact sheets and videos in English and other languages](#) to find:

- *Immunisation saves lives* fact sheets translated into nine languages and written for people with good literacy skills.
- *About Immunisation* fact sheets, written in a style suitable for people with low literacy skills. These are translated into 32 languages.
- Information about accessing immunisation records translated into 11 languages.
- Short videos about immunisation spoken in English with subtitle captions in various languages.

The fact sheets are written in English with a second language alongside to enable immunisation providers to use the resources in their discussions with patients/clients when there are language barriers.



Thank you to all who assisted in the development of these resources. Special thanks to the refugee community's health leadership group, the Group of 11 (G11) convened by Mater Health Services and to the Health Program Coordinators and Bilingual Health Workers at the Ethnic Communities Council Queensland. We are also grateful to the staff and students at TAFE Queensland, English Language and Literacy Services for their contributions.

Responding to vaccine delivery issues

When a vaccine order is delivered to a medical practice or facility it is important to check that it has arrived in an acceptable condition and cold chain conditions have been maintained.

Do not use the vaccines if a delivery arrives with one or more of the following conditions:

- Damaged
- Has not been packed appropriately
- Does not include temperature monitors
- The heat sensitive indicator and/or freeze sensitive monitor have been activated (the heat sensitive indicator bull's eye is darker than the outer circle, and/or the freeze sensitive monitor bulb has turned purple)

Following receipt of a delivery with any of the above conditions, to help the Immunisation Program team determine if the vaccines should be retained or discarded, please take the following actions:

- ✓ The staff member who received the delivery and noted a potential delivery issue to take photo/s of the interior and exterior of the package, the packing method, the vaccines, and the temperature indicators enclosed in the order, and any other relevant item.

- ✓ Once photos have been taken, place the delivery in the vaccine fridge and isolate the vaccines. Label do not use.
- ✓ Complete a vaccine delivery report form and email the form to immunisation@health.qld.gov.au with the subject line 'VACCINE DELIVERY REPORT'.
- ✓ The Immunisation Program will respond to your email as soon as possible with further advice.

Your assistance with this process will allow us to quickly replace your order if necessary, respond to any delivery issues, and help us continue to improve vaccine delivery process for all immunisation providers.

VACCINE DELIVERY REPORTING FORM

This form is used to report vaccine delivery issues that may have led to the vaccines being temperature-affected.

- The person who unpacked the delivery should complete this form.
- Please email the completed form to the Immunisation Program at immunisation@health.qld.gov.au.

Practice name	
VSP number	
Contact name	
Order number	
Date delivered	
Date reported	

VSP is complete:	YES	NO
Is this report being made by the person who unpacked the vaccines?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Was the vaccine delivery checked within one hour of delivery?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Was the vaccine delivery packed appropriately, i.e. with insulating material, ice bricks, cold chain monitor (CCM)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did the vials feel warm?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did the ice bricks melt?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did the ice bricks have melted too?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Was the CCM in contact with the ice bricks?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Where was the CCM located/placed inside the vial? (Please describe)		
Where was the heat monitor located/placed inside the vial? (Please describe)		
Any other relevant information or details? (Briefly describe)		

Immunisation Program use only:			
VSP action required	Discard vaccines	Yes	No
Reason for vaccine discard	CCM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Heat affected	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Delivery time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Damaged or tampered goods	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
IP action required	1. Email T&F for receipt	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2. Email CCLH-UCO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3. Email QHP-ADMIN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other comments			