



- Please immediately bring to the attention of all doctors -

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Contact telephone number: **8226-7177 (24 hours/7 days)**

Influenza vaccine recommendations

The following information is provided to clarify misinformation and confusion relating to the recommendations and dosage of influenza vaccine.

Who should receive the vaccine?

In line with the *Australian Immunisation Handbook* we advise that influenza vaccine should be offered to anyone over the age of 6 months seeking protection from influenza. The current influenza epidemic may continue for a number of weeks and providers are advised to opportunistically recommend the vaccine to patients as they present to their practice. There is no requirement that patient recalls are carried out.

From what age can the vaccine be given?

6 months of age. Fluvax® Product Information states the vaccine can be given from 3 months of age. The recommendation from the most recent edition of the *Australian Immunisation Handbook* states that influenza vaccine should only be given from 6 months of age. There are no plans to change this recommendation. Providers are advised to follow these recommendations which are set by the National Health and Medical research Council (NHMRC).

What is the correct vaccine dosage for use in children?

Changes have been made recently to the dosage recommendations for children. These changes are contained in the information in the Influenza Chapter of the new edition (not yet released) of the *Australian Immunisation Handbook* (9th ed). The changes are as a result of new immunogenicity data and not in response to the current influenza strain circulating. In light of the current influenza situation the Australian Government has recently released the Influenza Chapter from the 9th edition ahead of the rest of the handbook. The new dosage is contained in the table below. Providers are advised to follow these recommendations. Vaxigrip Junior® is specifically produced for use in children and is presented as 0.25ml. Other vaccines are in a presentation of 0.5ml but some will have 0.25ml mark on the syringe to enable adjustment for paediatric doses

If children have been vaccinated under the old recommendation, do they need to be revaccinated?

No. The new recommendations apply to those presenting now for vaccination and there is NO need to revaccinate those who have received the dosage schedule detailed in the 8th ed. Where a child requires 2 doses of vaccine and has received one under the old schedule the 2nd dose should be according to the new schedule.

Recommended doses of influenza vaccine

Age	Dose	Number of Doses (first vaccination)	Number of doses* (subsequent years)
6 months-<3 years	0.25ml	2†	1
3-9 years	0.5 ml	2†	1
>9 years	0.5ml	1	1

* If a child 6 months to ≤9 years of age receiving influenza vaccine for the first time inadvertently does not receive the second dose within the same year, they should have 2 doses administered the following year.

† Two doses at least 1 month apart are recommended for children aged ≤9 years who are receiving influenza vaccine for the first time. The same vial should not be re-used for the 2 doses.

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Information contained within this advice should be treated as confidential and is for the intended recipient only.

PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT