

Influenza clinics – a checklist to support your practice

This checklist has been developed to help your practice vaccinate patients and staff. **gpns** understands that your practice will develop a process that best suits your way of working.

Who should be vaccinated against influenza?

Annual influenza (flu) vaccination is recommended for any person \geq 6 months of age who wants to reduce the likelihood of becoming ill with the flu.

Funded (free) influenza vaccination is strongly recommended for the following groups:

- All people aged 65 years and over.
- All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) people aged 15 years and over.
(*The Australian Immunisation Handbook 9th Edition, p 190*)

Not funded (not free) but strongly recommended and should be actively promoted:

- Individuals 6 months and older with conditions predisposing them to severe influenza eg cardiac disease, chronic respiratory conditions, diabetics. (Full list in *The Handbook*, pp 190-191).
- People who frequently come into contact with at-risk persons (eg practice staff, parents carers etc).
- All other persons (*The Handbook*, pp 192 -193).

Who shouldn't be vaccinated?

The vaccine is contraindicated for use in those who:

- have experienced anaphylaxis following a previous dose of any influenza vaccine
- have experienced anaphylaxis following any vaccine component
- have anaphylactic sensitivity to eggs (*The Handbook, p 193*)
- are aged less than 6 months
- caution should be taken with patients with a history of Guillain-Barre Syndrome (GBS) with an onset related in time to influenza vaccination (*The Handbook pp 193*).

Planning a clinic

1. Hold a practice meeting to:

- a) appoint team leaders
- b) have the numbers of eligible and 'at risk' clients available
- c) decide if dedicated influenza vaccination clinics will be:
 - nurse-only clinic
 - GP and nurse clinic
 - GP-only clinic
- d) examine staffing capacity - may need extra nursing staff
- e) plan and schedule the flu clinics (eg am/pm/Sat am clinics over 6-7 weeks)
- f) discuss how to promote clinics to patients
- g) discuss vaccine ordering for funded patients
- h) decide the best way to deal with private patients and the cold chain management of their pharmacy-bought vaccine by liaising with your local pharmacy
- i) plan vaccination of staff
- j) make staff aware of your infection control policy, including hand hygiene, cough etiquette and social distancing.

2. *Search for the number of eligible patients*
 - Use Medical Director and the CAT tool to search for the above groups (funded and non-funded).
 - Download and collate data utilising this opportunity to data cleanse (eg inactive and deceased patients).
3. *Promotion to patients may include*
 - mail out to eligible patients/clients
 - waiting room posters
 - telling patients about flu vaccination when they ring for appointments
 - pre-recorded message on practice phone
 - practice newsletter.
4. *Staffing and space*
 - Consider increasing nursing hours over the flu season for efficient running of nurse led flu clinics.
 - Based on staffing arrangements, space may be an issue, revise roster and room allocation.
5. *Bookings*
 - Set up 10-minute appointments in medical software and ensure signage and all promotional material advises patients that their Flu Clinic appointment is for influenza/+ pneumococcal vaccination only.
6. *Ordering and Cold Chain Management*
 - Order influenza vaccines fortnightly, enough for a fortnight plus a 10% buffer.
 - Review all clients 65 years and over for pneumococcal status and order pneumococcal (Pneumovax 23) vaccine accordingly.
 - Check if Anaphylaxis Response Kit contents including adrenaline, is unexpired. Additional ampoules of Adrenaline 1:1000 should be available.
 - Revise emergency procedures with all staff.
7. *Medicare Australia – MBS item numbers*
 - Ensure all staff are aware of the billing arrangements for private patients attending the flu clinics.
 - MBS items cannot be claimed for work place flu programs.
8. *Resources*
 - Use the *Fight Flu* website, NCIRS fact sheets for staff training, Standing Drug Orders.
 - Consent procedures (use the Consent Resource Folder from the Immunisation Section, Department of Health to streamline the consent process).
 - Provide a Personal Health Record and Vaccine Safety leaflet (Immunisation Section, Department of Health resources) to patients post vaccination. **Advise them to wait for 15 minutes following vaccination, (*The Handbook* pp 61).** The NHMRC recommends clients should also be warned of the risk of driving for at least 30 minutes following vaccination.
 - Have adequate supplies of tissues, anti bacterial hand lotion, masks and gloves.
9. *Run clinics*
 - Commence clinics and review systems at next scheduled practice meeting.
 - Document all influenza and pneumococcal vaccination in Medical Director or practice software immunisation tab.

Useful Websites

National Institute of Clinical Studies <http://www.fightflu.gov.au>
 Immunise Australia Program <http://www.immunise.health.gov.au/internet/immunise/publishing.nsf/Content/publications#flu>
 National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance <http://www.ncirs.usyd.edu.au>
 Immunisation Section, Department of Health <http://www.health.sa.gov.au/PEHS/immunisation-index.htm>
 gpns Immunisation Program <http://www.gpns.org.au/site/index.cfm?display=3213>

For recommended doses of influenza vaccine, refer to *The Handbook* - table 3.9, p 189.