

Kia ora colleagues,

To protect individuals and the wider health system over the challenging winter months, we're encouraging all New Zealanders to ensure they are up to date with all vaccines they are eligible for.

During the 2023 flu vaccine season there were more than 1.2 million influenza vaccines administered in Aotearoa, New Zealand. We know that for many consumers this may be their only touch point with a healthcare professional over the year. We strongly encourage vaccinating teams to use this opportunity to review immunisation status and offer other vaccines they are eligible for.

When there is no capacity for administering additional vaccines at the vaccination appointment time, consumers should receive support to rebook either with your service or another provider. Please encourage those not enrolled with General Practice to use Book My Vaccine (BMV) to book with another provider. The recommended vaccines can be documented on the "After the flu vaccine" leaflet HP8682 available from BlueStar, HealthEd or the Immunisation Dropbox (see links below).

Any vaccines on the New Zealand immunisation schedule can be administered in the same visit and the provider¹ will receive a co-administration payment if the funded influenza vaccine is administered at the same time as a funded shingles vaccine, or a Boostrix vaccine for a pregnant person. See below for more details. If COVID-19 vaccine is administered at the same visit as a funded influenza vaccine two separate vaccine administration fees can be claimed.

This year the portal to claim healthcare and disability sector influenza vaccines will continue to ensure your teams are able to access free flu protection.

For more information or if you have further questions, please email Prevention@health.govt.nz or contact your [Immunisation Coordinator](#).

Any clinical questions should be directed to IMAC via 0800 IMMUNE or email 0800immune@auckland.ac.nz 8.30am to 5.00pm weekdays.

Regards

Prevention
National Public Health Service

¹ General Practice or Community Pharmacy with Service Agreement in place.

INFLUENZA VACCINES

Where do I find information about the 2024 Influenza Vaccination Programme?

- The IMAC 2024 Influenza Toolkit contains clinical information, data sheets, vaccine ordering details, and resources available for both consumers and vaccinators. Refer to [Influenza \(immune.org.nz\)](https://www.immune.org.nz).
- For the latest consumer posters and leaflets see below.
- Eligibility is published on the Pharmac website [Schedule Online - Influenza vaccine \(pharmac.govt.nz\)](https://www.pharmac.govt.nz). NB: This year the temporary eligibility for all children under 12 years of age and Māori & Pacific people aged 55 years to 64 years is **not** included. However, all ages and ethnicities who have eligible long-term conditions remain eligible.

COVID-19 VACCINES

What are the new COVID-19 vaccines and how do I find out about these?

- 7 March 2024 saw the introduction of two new Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine products. Pfizer Comirnaty Omicron XBB.1.5 30mcg, has **replaced** the Pfizer Comirnaty Original 30mcg vaccine used for years 12+ primary doses and Pfizer Comirnaty 15mcg Original / 15mcg Omicron BA.4-5 used for booster doses.
- **Pfizer Comirnaty Omicron XBB.1.5 30mcg** is available as a:
 - non-dilute light grey cap vaccine **single dose vial**
 - non-dilute dark grey cap vaccine **multidose vial**
- Eligibility criteria remains the same, as does the recommended spacing between doses and COVID-19 infection.
- The primary course of a COVID-19 Pfizer vaccine is now a single dose.
- The COVID-19 vaccination administration remains a stand-alone payment, if another scheduled vaccine is administered at the same event as a COVID-19 vaccine, two administration fees will be paid.
- Consent form and consumer information sheets have been updated.
- IMAC has produced new resources to support vaccinators which includes a free webinar to view at any time. [COVID-19 Programme - Immunisation Advisory Centre \(immune.org.nz\)](https://www.immune.org.nz)

MMR CATCH UP VACCINES

Should I offer an MMR vaccine if there is no evidence of two prior doses in the AIR?

- In general, for anyone born after January 1969 two doses of an MMR vaccine, administered at least 4 weeks apart, is required for immunity. Some consumers may have had MMR doses recorded into GP notes or child health records such as a Plunket book which may not have been transferred into the NIR and then AIR.
- For guidance on MMR and all catch up doses, vaccinators should be familiar with clinical guidance including when a live MMR vaccine is contraindicated. Quick answers to frequent MMR questions – Factsheets – Immunisation Advisory Centre (immune.org.nz)
- If there are not two documented doses recorded into AIR there is no need to delay, the vaccinator should feel confident to offer a dose of MMR vaccine. There are no safety concerns if a person is given an extra dose of an MMR vaccine.
- See the Immunisation Dropbox for MMR resources and social media tiles to support catch up MMR work.

PREGNANCY VACCINES

How can a pregnant person prepare for winter?

Please ensure any pregnant person is aware they are eligible for the following funded vaccines during each pregnancy, when it is best to have these, and how they can be accessed.

- **Influenza vaccine** – those pregnant during a flu vaccination season should be offered a free flu vaccine.
- **COVID-19 vaccine**
- Pfizer Comirnaty Omicron XBB.1.5 30mcg is the recommended COVID-19 vaccine for pregnant people.
- **Boostrix (Tdap)** is funded from the second trimester (14 weeks of pregnancy) and recommended from 16 weeks of **each pregnancy** up until delivery, and preferably at *least* two weeks before baby is due, so that the vaccine can give baby the best protection.
- See below for links to consumer resources including leaflets, posters and information for pregnancy vaccines. A new combined pregnancy vaccine leaflet is underway.
- Whenever a vaccinator is discussing vaccines with a pregnant person, they should ensure the whānau are registered with a GP or health provider who will be responsible for baby's healthcare and vaccinations when they are born. If they do not currently have a GP support them to contact Healthline to arrange access or if possible, refer them directly to a GP service.
- It is recommended that whānau have their baby's six-week immunisations booked by the time they are 4 weeks old as many services may have limited appointments.

- Leaflets on the importance of on time vaccines should be given and are able to be ordered for free from HealthEd / Bluestar [Set your tamariki up for a healthy future – HP8686 – HealthEd](#)

CO-ADMINISTRATION OF VACCINES

Which vaccines can be administered alongside the flu vaccine and how do I claim for any administration payments?

- All vaccines available on the national immunisation schedule can be offered at the same time as an influenza vaccination.
- An additional vaccination co-administration payment will be applied from (and including) 2 April 2024 to 31 December 2024 for the following vaccine events;
- A funded influenza vaccine administered to a pregnant person also receiving a Boostrix Tdap vaccine – correct indication code must be entered into your PMS for the pregnant person in order to trigger payment.
- Influenza-Boostrix vaccine co-administration payments will be paid automatically on a monthly basis starting from May 2024.
- A vaccine coadministration fee is also payable if a funded influenza and a shingles vaccine are administered at the same time (as per the national general practice and community pharmacy agreements).
- The COVID-19 vaccination administration remains a stand-alone payment. If another scheduled vaccine is administered at the same event as a COVID-19 vaccine, two administration fees will be paid.
- To support concomitant vaccination a 'combined vaccine consent form' is now available in the Immunisation Dropbox (NIP8896 Vaccination informed consent form) to sit alongside the pregnancy vaccine combined consent form also in the Dropbox.
- IMAC should be contacted for any clinical questions regarding concomitant vaccination if required or refer to the Immunisation Handbook. Vaccinators should also refer to the vaccinator screening checklist.
- Post vaccine wait time will vary if administering a COVID-19 vaccine or other scheduled vaccine alongside the influenza immunisation. Please refer to the Influenza toolkit for guidance.

How does a pharmacy onboard to offer the range of adult immunisations including MMR, Tdap, shingles, HPV and meningococcal vaccines?

- Contact your District Immunisation Lead, Pharmacy Portfolio Lead or Immunisation Coordinator for support and guidance including how to access vaccine through the Inventory Portal.
- There is no minimum number required for orders however it is suggested a provider has at least 1-2 doses of all adult vaccines in stock. Systems will need to be in place to ensure funded stock is kept separate from non-funded stock.
- A pharmacy must request access to the Inventory Portal to obtain funded vaccines.

OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

How do providers access social media tiles/images to use?

- Influenza and COVID-19 collateral, including social media tiles are being developed and will be available in the [National Immunisation Programme Dropbox](#). If you cannot access the Dropbox, please email immunisation@health.govt.nz

How do providers order free leaflets, posters and consent forms?

- You can access immunisation collateral using the Immunisation Dropbox, HealthEd or by ordering printed collateral from Bluestar.
- You can register and access your Bluestar account from https://portal.bluestar.co.nz/login/moh_vaccine
- You can access HealthEd on <https://healthed.govt.nz/>
- Printed posters and brochures will be available to order from Bluestar towards the end of March 2024.

How can an employer claim the cost of Influenza vaccinations for my front-line health and disability staff?

- If you are a non-Health NZ district employer of health and disability staff who have patient contact and are not eligible for a funded influenza vaccine, you are entitled to claim back up to \$35 + GST for the cost of an influenza vaccination delivered to each staff member. This may include staff employed at a pharmacy, Māori health provider, occupational health, dentist, etc. This is managed through the Health NZ reimbursement portal which opens from 2 April 2024 until 11 October 2024. For full details click [here](#).
- You cannot claim for staff your business does not employ.

Where should vaccine events be recorded for 2024?

- All vaccination events including influenza must be entered into AIR.
- Consumers expect these events to be available on platforms such as 'My Health Record' as well as updated in GP records.

TECHNOLOGY ENABLERS

How does an immunisation provider sign up to appear on Book My Vaccine (BMV)?

- Book My Vaccine is available for all funded vaccines; COVID-19 (all ages), Influenza (all ages), Tdap (11 years and older), MMR (6 months and older), HPV9 (9 to 45 years), rZV (herpes/ shingles) (50 years and older), MenB and MenACWY (13 to 25 years), and all scheduled childhood immunisations and catch-ups.
- Providers can sign up to use Book My Vaccine [here](#).
- More information on how to sign up, get support and find answers to frequently asked questions is available here: [Book My Vaccine – Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora](#)

How do I onboard to AIR?

- For any questions or support on new user onboarding, please use the following resources:
- The [Health NZ website](#) hosts AIR [onboarding guides](#) and a [Vaccine System Toolkit](#).
- [Getting started with the Aotearoa Immunisation Register](#) (IMAC course)
- For more support when using the AIR, please use the link [here](#) to access the AIR service desk portal or call the team on 0800 855 066 (press 2 and then 1)

If I used AIR last year to enter flu vaccines will I automatically be able to enter them in the 2024 season?

- Contact help@imms.min.health.nz to confirm the status of your account. Account reactivation may be required.

How do I onboard to the Inventory Portal?

- Facilities must request access to the Inventory Portal where funded vaccines are managed. The site must contact their regional System Design Manager – Referred Service or District Immunisations leads to process a new site setup form found in Appendix B of the COVID-19 Operating Guidelines [here](#)..

How does an immunisation provider sign up to appear on Healthpoint?

- Consumers are regularly directed to Healthpoint to find local vaccination services. Staff working in services such as Whakarongorau use the information to direct consumers.
- You can register and sign up for a Healthpoint account on <https://www.healthpoint.co.nz/>
- All providers with a Healthpoint listing must ensure their information is up to date and include ages vaccination is offered to at the site as well as walk in options including best times for these if offered.
- If you need assistance with editing, please contact info@healthpoint.co.nz