



Oifig Náisiúnta Imdhíonta
Aonaid 8/9 Páirc Gnó Shráid an Mhainéir
Sráid an Mhainéir
Baile Átha Cliath 7, D07 X320

HSE National Immunisation Office
Unit 8/9 Manor Street Business Park
Manor Street
Dublin 7, D07 X320

www.immunisation.ie
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Dear Sir/Madam,

04th Sept 2023

Influenza Vaccination Programme 2023/24

Annual influenza (flu) vaccination is strongly recommended for those aged 65 and older, those at risk and children aged 2-12 years and for it to be administered in early in the season.

Vaccines available

Two types of flu vaccines will be available for 2023/2024 HSE seasonal flu vaccination programme.

1. LAIV: live attenuated, nasal spray suspension vaccine - Fluenz Tetra packed in boxes of 10 applicators. Available for use in the HSE programme for all children aged 2-12 years and at-risk children aged 13-17 years (eligible cohorts as listed below).
2. QIV: Injectable inactivated egg-based quadrivalent influenza vaccine- Influvac Tetra, (packed in boxes of 10 prefilled syringes). Available for all other eligible populations including those eligible children (aged 2-17 years) with contraindications to LAIV (QIV is licensed for those 6 months of age and older).

Eligible groups for 2023/24 HSE influenza vaccination programme

The following groups are eligible to receive the flu vaccine for free through the HSE programme. People who:

- are 65 years of age and over
- are a child aged 2 to 12 years
- are pregnant
- all those aged 6-23 months and 13-64 years at increased risk of influenza-related complications such as:
 - Those with chronic illness, e.g. chronic heart disease (including acute coronary syndrome), chronic liver disease, chronic neurological disease (where the neurological condition compromises clearance of respiratory secretions), chronic renal failure, chronic respiratory disease (including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, cystic fibrosis, moderate or severe asthma, and bronchopulmonary dysplasia), diabetes mellitus, or haemoglobinopathies
 - Those with immunosuppression due to disease or treatment, including asplenia or hyposplenism, and all cancer patients
 - Those with any condition that can compromise respiratory function (e.g. spinal cord injury, seizure disorder, or other neuromuscular disorder,) especially those attending special schools/ day centres
 - Children and adults with Down syndrome
 - Children with moderate to severe neurodevelopmental disorders such as cerebral palsy and intellectual disability
 - Those with morbid obesity (Body mass index >40)
- Residents of nursing homes, old people's homes, and other long stay facilities where rapid spread is likely to follow introduction of infection
- Healthcare workers
- Household contacts of people with underlying chronic health condition or Down syndrome
- Out-of-home care givers for people who have an underlying chronic health condition or have Down syndrome.
- People in regular contact with pigs, poultry or waterfowl

Vaccine ordering

Order vaccines online ordervaccines.ie from the HSE National Cold Chain Service (NCCS) as per order dates.

Once NCCS communicates that orders are open, you can order:

- Up to 100% of your **Influvac Tetra (QIV)** allocation, with fortnightly deliveries commencing on 18th September 2023 as per your delivery calendar
- **Fluenz Tetra (LAIV)** as required based on vaccination clinics planned with fortnightly deliveries commencing on 25th September 2023 as per your delivery calendar. This vaccine will expire **29th December 2023**.

Patient held vaccination record cards for QIV and post vaccination (tear-pad) leaflets for LAIV will be delivered with the vaccine, which should be completed and given to your patients after vaccination.

Please only order the amount of vaccine that you will require before your next delivery. Please plan your clinics accordingly as deliveries will be fortnightly.



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Vaccination of staff and residents in long-term residential care facilities.

From **2nd October** HSE COVID-19 mobile vaccination teams will offer flu vaccine and COVID -19 booster, if needed, to the following cohorts:

- Long-Term Residential Care Facilities
 - To all residents (regardless of age)
 - Health and Care Workers (H&CWs) .H&CWs can also access the free flu vaccine at participating GPs and pharmacies or via the local flu peer vaccination service.

The HSE COVID-19 vaccination teams will be ordering the flu vaccine required for this activity. Long-Term Residential Care Facilities (including nursing homes) have therefore been advised not to order flu vaccines for their residents.

As HSE COVID-19 mobile vaccination teams will be offering the flu vaccine and COVID-19 vaccine to residents and staff in long-term residential care facilities; flu vaccine ordering from long term residential care facilities is expected to be minimal. However, some may wish to vaccinate staff under the peer vaccination programme (under appropriate local clinical governance) and to do this they can either:

- a) Request their GP or Pharmacy to order and store the vaccines on their behalf or
- b) You can order flu vaccines directly from the HSE National Cold Chain Service (NCCS) for delivery to your site using the online ordering system ordervaccines.ie (if you have an active account) where your calendar is available, indicating order dates and delivery dates.

Note if NCCS are delivering directly to your site vaccines must be maintained within the cold chain in a pharmaceutical fridge and you should manage vaccine stock in accordance with best practice. You should have an independent data-logger in the pharmaceutical fridge. See HSE National Immunisation Office (NIO) policy on this matter:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/hcpinfo/vaccineordering/sopnio01.pdf>

Key resources

The following key resources are available:

- Visit www.hse.ie/flu for patient information material and to download HSE flu campaign resources (including leaflets and posters)
- Information for healthcare professionals is available on www.immunisation.ie
- E-learning modules on LAIV and QIV are available on www.hseland.ie

Immunisation system for flu vaccinations

For 2023/2024 flu season all sites administering the flu vaccine will use the ICT system COVAX for capturing immunisation records for Flu, as well as PPV23 vaccines. All vaccinators will need to record any flu vaccinations administered (that were delivered by the National Cold Chain Service i.e. not privately purchased) either directly onto COVAX or use the Community Vax Portal to send the data into COVAX.

If your organization falls under the Section 39 or Private Healthcare category and you have not yet secured access to COVAX, please consider the following:

1. **Access Deadline:** The new deadline for requesting access to the Community Vax Portal is Monday, Friday the 8th of September, 2023.
2. **Contact Information:** To facilitate this process, kindly email Brenda Kane at Brenda.Kane@hse.ie or Shane O'Connor at Shane.OConnor4@hse.ie with the necessary information:
 - Your organization's name.
 - Contact person details from your organization.
 - Any additional information or questions you may have regarding access to the Community Vax Portal.

As there are many providers of flu vaccinations, it is essential that all vaccines given are recorded promptly, so that clinical records are kept up to date and two doses are not administered in error.



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Actions required by you

- ✓ Please remove all expired vaccines from your fridge, including 2022/2023 flu season vaccines and place them in a box with completed returns form, store securely until returned to the HSE National Cold Chain Service van driver.
- ✓ Vaccine deliveries will be fortnightly from 18th September once the order has been placed in time as per your calendar. Ensure you have adequate pharmaceutical fridge space for arriving vaccines.
- ✓ Do not order COVID 19 booster vaccine for the 2023 Autumn Booster Programme until a communication on the programme is issued.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr Lucy Jessop
Consultant in Public Health Medicine – National Immunisation Lead
National Immunisation Office MRCN 424447