



FAQ flu vaccine

This year there have been no changes to the HSE's seasonal influenza vaccination programme except the addition of all children between 2 and 12 years and payment by PCERS rather than the patient for those without medical/ GP visit cards.

We have received a lot of questions from members of the public, GPs, Practice Nurses and Pharmacists and have prepared some frequently asked question for you and your staff which we hope will be helpful. Please ensure all staff with any involvement in the flu vaccine programme, including reception and/or pharmacy retail staff are aware of the eligibility criteria.

Who is eligible for influenza vaccine provided by the HSE's national cold chain service?

Only those who are in the HSE's target eligible groups for influenza vaccine should receive influenza vaccine supplied by the HSE's national cold chain service. There have been no changes to eligible groups, except for the addition of all children aged 2-12 years. See overleaf for details.

HSE stock must not be used for anyone who is not on this list. Privately procured stock must be administered to those not included on the list and who wish to be vaccinated. This is a private arrangement.

Are any occupational health groups eligible for influenza vaccine supplied by the HSE's national cold chain service?

Only healthcare workers, carers of those at medical risk of the complications of flu, and people in close contact with pigs, poultry and water fowl are eligible for HSE-supplied vaccine.

Other occupational health groups (e.g. teachers, gardai, postal workers, council staff etc.) are not eligible for HSE-supplied influenza vaccine. If they wish to be vaccinated, this is a private arrangement and the vaccine must be procured privately.

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/hcpinfo/guidelines/chapter11.pdf>



Which household contacts are eligible to receive HSE-supplied influenza vaccine?

Only household contacts or carers of people who have an underlying chronic health condition or have Down syndrome are eligible to receive HSE-supplied influenza vaccine. See overleaf for details.

Household contacts of people aged 65 years and older (who do not also have a chronic health condition), pregnant women, children aged 2-12 years or of healthcare workers or carers are **not eligible** for HSE-supplied influenza vaccine.

These eligibility criteria are based on the recommendations of the National immunisation Advisory Committee.

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/hcpinfo/guidelines/chapter11.pdf>

Can I charge a fee for administration of the flu vaccine if I am giving HSE-supplied influenza vaccine to an eligible patient who doesn't have a medical card?

This year, for the first time, you must claim payment through the PCERS system for administration of all flu vaccines provided by the HSE. This applies to all eligible people including children aged 2-12 years, **regardless of whether they have a medical or GP visit card or not.**

Therefore anyone who is in an eligible group for the HSE-supplied vaccine should not be charged a fee for the administration of the vaccine even if they do not have a medical or GP visit card.

Can medical card holders, who are not in a group eligible for HSE vaccine, be vaccinated with HSE-supplied influenza vaccine?

No. Medical card holders must be in an eligible group to receive free HSE flu vaccine.



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 pregnant
- are a child aged 2 to 12 years (new for 2020/2021)
- All those aged 6-23 months and 13-64 years at increased risk of the complications of influenza because of the following conditions:
 - chronic heart disease, including acute coronary syndrome
 - chronic liver disease
 - chronic renal failure
 - chronic respiratory disease, including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), cystic fibrosis, moderate or severe asthma or bronchopulmonary dysplasia
 - chronic neurological disease including multiple sclerosis, hereditary and degenerative disorders of the central nervous system (where the neurological condition compromises clearance of respiratory secretions)
 - diabetes mellitus
 - haemoglobinopathies
 - morbid obesity i.e. body mass index (BMI) over 40
 - immunosuppression due to disease or treatment (including treatment for cancer)
 - are a child with a moderate to severe neurodevelopmental disorder such as cerebral palsy
- were born with Down syndrome
- live in a nursing home or other long-term care facility
- work in healthcare
- are a carer or live with someone who is at risk of flu because of a long-term health condition
- are a carer or live with someone who has Down syndrome
- are in regular contact with pigs, poultry or waterfowl

