2026 Influenza Immunisation Program Provider Toolkit

Immunisation Section | SA Health

Aim of the toolkit

This toolkit provides South Australian immunisation providers with information on the 2026 funded Influenza Immunisation Program, including 2026 vaccines, eligibility, ordering and delivery dates, reporting requirements and cold chain management information.

Key Points

- Everyone from 6 months of age is recommended to receive the influenza vaccines.
- The National Immunisation Program (NIP) provides funded vaccines for Medicare-eligible people most at-risk of severe disease from influenza infection.
- South Australia also funds the influenza vaccines for people experiencing homelessness not eligible as part of the NIP.
- In 2026, a live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV) delivered as an intranasal spray will be available for eligible South Australian children aged 2 to less than 5 years of age (who have no contraindications) in addition to the inactivated influenza vaccines administered by intramuscular injection available under the NIP.
- Recommendations have changed regarding the number of doses required for children receiving an influenza vaccine for the first time. Ensure you are up-to-date with all 2026 influenza program information before administering any influenza vaccine.
- Health professionals are the most trusted source of immunisation advice. Evidence shows recommendation by a health care professional significantly increases uptake.
- Please continue to offer influenza vaccines at every opportunity and consider how your practice can promote influenza vaccination to your most vulnerable patients.
- Consumer surveys[1] report access and cost as barriers to getting vaccinated. Understanding barriers to vaccinations will assist the provider to identify ways to engage, encourage and support patients for vaccination.
- Communicating strategies your practice may implement to assist families, such as holding flu clinics outside school hours will help remove some barriers for patients and may improve uptake.
- Inactivated and LAIV influenza vaccines can be administered at the same time as other NIP vaccines. No interval is required before or after administration of the LAIV nasal spray, including other live vaccines.

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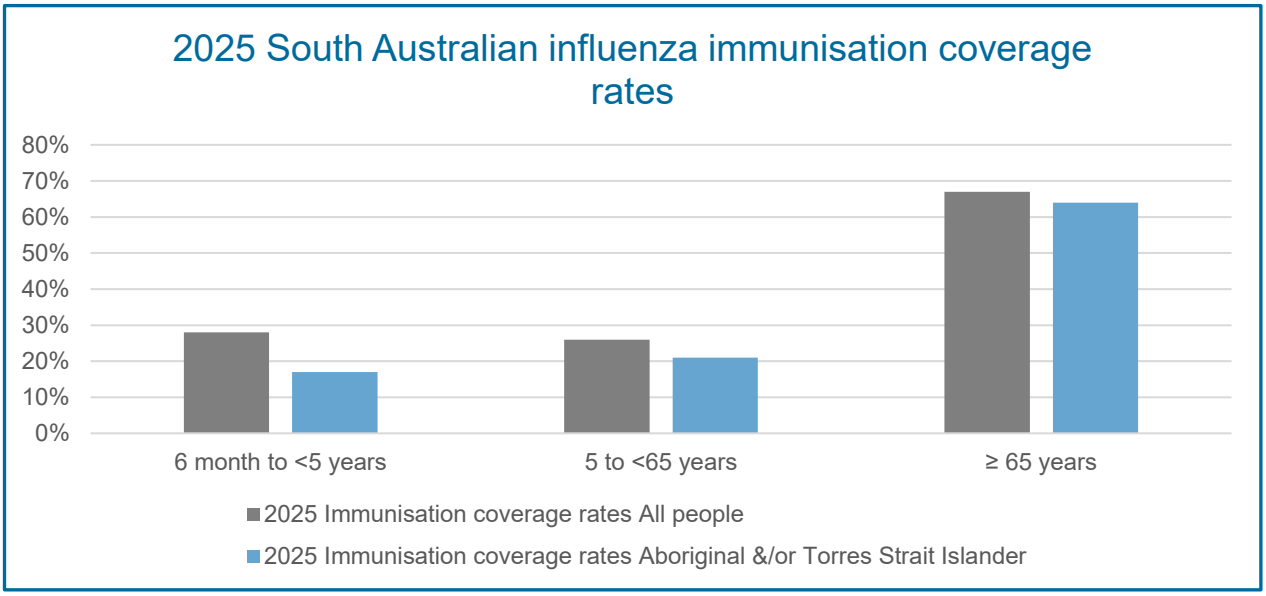
2025 influenza season in South Australia

36,243 reported cases of influenza

3,692 hospitalisations

84 deaths attributed to influenza

712,287 influenza vaccine encounters reported to the AIR



510,865 flu vaccines distributed to over 1000 providers between 21 March and 31 December, including 377,995 in the first 6 weeks (74% of entire influenza vaccine for 2025).

Eligible groups for funded vaccines

NIP

- **Children from 6 months to less than 5 years of age**. This age group is most vulnerable to influenza and complications of infection. All children 6 months to less than 2 years of age and children less than 9 years of age with a medical risk condition having an influenza vaccine for the first time should receive 2 doses 4 weeks apart. Both doses are funded.
- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 6 months and over**. This group are at higher risk of infection, complications and hospitalisation.
- **Pregnant women**. The influenza vaccine is safe to have during pregnancy. Women who are pregnant are at increased risk of morbidity and mortality, as well as pre-term birth from influenza infection. It also provides protection for newborns against influenza in the first 6 months of life until they can receive the vaccination themselves. Influenza vaccine is recommended in each pregnancy. It can be given in any trimester and can be co-administered with all other vaccines recommended in pregnancy[4]. If a woman received a seasonal influenza vaccine prior to becoming pregnant she should have it repeated during the pregnancy to protect the baby.
- **All people 65 years of age and older**. This age group has the highest mortality rate from influenza infection. The adjuvanted vaccine Fluad provided under the NIP enhances the immune response in this age group compared to standard influenza vaccines.
- **People 6 months of age and older with certain medical conditions.** People with specified medical conditions are at increased risk of severe illness and complications from influenza. For further information of specified medical conditions see the Australian Immunisation Handbook.

State funded programs

- **People who are experiencing homelessness**. For people living in improvised dwellings, sleeping rough, supported accommodation for the homeless and temporary or severely crowded dwellings who do not meet other eligibility criteria.
- **2026 South Australian Nasal Spray Influenza Vaccination Program**. Children aged 2 to less than 5 years eligible for a funded influenza vaccine under the NIP who have no contraindications can be offered the LAIV nasal spray.

2026 Funded Influenza Program

Composition of 2026 influenza vaccines

In 2026 all funded influenza vaccines will be trivalent containing 2 A and 1 B influenza virus strains, completing the transition from quadrivalent vaccines as recommended by the World Health Organisation and supported by the Australian Influenza Vaccine Committee. The B/Yamagata lineage component has been removed from seasonal influenza vaccines as it has not been detected in circulation for several years[3].

The funded influenza program will use both egg and cell-based influenza vaccines with no preferential recommendation as advised by The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI)[4].

Egg-based influenza vaccines:

- an A/Missouri/11/2025 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus;
- an A/Singapore/GP20238/2024 (H3N2)-like virus; and
- a B/Austria/1359417/2021 (B/Victoria lineage)-like virus;

Cell-based influenza vaccines:

- an A/Missouri/11/2025 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus;
- an A/Sydney/1359/2024 (H3N2)-like virus; and
- a B/Austria/1359417/2021 (B/Victoria lineage)-like virus;

Figure 1. Funded influenza vaccines available for 2026 by age group.

All funded influenza vaccines in 2026 are trivalent					
Age Group	**FluMist®** Intranasal spray **0.1ml per nostril (total 0.2mL)** Live attenuated	**Vaxigrip®** **0.5mL (IM)** Inactivated	**Flucelvax®** **0.5mL (IM)** Inactivated	**Fluad®** **0.5mL (IM)** Inactivated adjuvanted	**Important information**
6 months to less than 2 years	✗	✓	✗	✗	**Two doses 4 weeks apart are required for:** • children aged 6 months to less than 2 years of age receiving influenza vaccine for the first time • children aged 2 years to less than 9 years of age with a medical risk condition (as per the Australian Immunisation Handbook) receiving influenza vaccine for the first time • people being vaccinated in their first year post haematopoietic stem cell transplant, solid organ transplant or CAR-T cell therapy.
2 years to less than 5 years	✓	✓	✗	✗	
5 years to less than 65 years	✗	✓	✓	✗	
65 years and older	✗	✗	✗	✓	

Ensure you have the correct vaccine for the individual's age.

Table 1: NIP funded influenza vaccines by eligible cohort

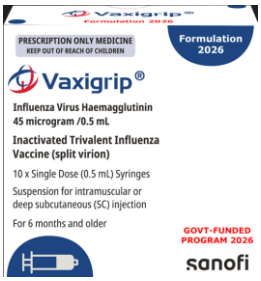
NIP funded Influenza vaccines	
Vaccine	**NIP funded for**
Vaxigrip® Egg-based vaccine 0.5mL IM injection 	• Children 6 months to less than 5 years • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 6 months to less than 65 years • People aged 5 to less than 65 years with medical risk conditions • Pregnant women
Flucelvax® Cell-based vaccine 0.5mL IM injection 	• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 5 to less than 65 years • People aged 5 to less than 65 years with medical risk conditions • Pregnant women • Note – NIP stock will have ‘Government Funded’ labelling on packaging Ensure NIP and state-funded stock is clearly labelled and stored separately in your vaccine fridge.
Fluad® Egg-based adjuvanted vaccine 0.5mL IM injection 	• people aged 65 years and over. Fluad is an adjuvanted vaccine which elicits a greater immune response in older people than standard-dose influenza vaccines.

Table 2: State funded influenza vaccines by eligible cohort

State funded influenza vaccines	
Vaccine	**State funded for**
FluMist® Live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV) - nasal spray 0.2mL intranasal spray Delivered as one 0.1mL spray in each nostril 	• Children aged 2 to less than 5 years For full program information see the SA Nasal Spray Influenza Vaccination Program fact sheet for immunisation providers - Appendix 1. Refer to the Australian Immunisation Handbook for up-to-date information on contraindications and precautions to the LAIV nasal spray. Children with contraindications to the LAIV nasal spray, **including all children less than 2 years of age** should be offered the age-appropriate inactivated NIP influenza vaccine.
Flucelvax® Cell-based vaccine 0.5mL IM injection 	• People experiencing homelessness not otherwise eligible for NIP funded vaccine Note – state-funded Flucelvax will not have the 'Government Funded' labelling on the packaging. Ensure NIP and state-funded stock is clearly labelled and stored separately in your vaccine fridge.

Influenza vaccine doses

Updated recommendations

Most people are recommended to receive one dose of influenza vaccine each year.

Some people are recommended to receive two doses 4 weeks apart for the best protection.

In 2026 those recommended to have two doses include:

- Children aged 6 months to less than 2 years receiving an influenza vaccine for the first time.
- Children aged 6 months to less than 9 years with medical risk conditions receiving an influenza vaccine for the first time.
- People who have had a haematopoietic stem cell transplant, solid organ transplant or CAR T-cell therapy and are receiving influenza vaccine for the first time after the transplant.

People with allergies

Egg allergy

Egg allergy is not a contraindication to receiving the funded influenza vaccine, including the LAIV nasal spray. People with egg allergy including anaphylaxis can be administered the influenza vaccine safely.

Refer to the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) Egg allergy and influenza vaccination FAQs.

Latex allergy

All funded influenza vaccines in 2026 are latex free.

Refer to the vaccine PI for a full list of excipients.

Ordering Vaccines

Important dates

- **March 12** – Fluad available to order
- **March 16** – Fluad distribution commences
- **April 1** – All other flu vaccines available to order
- **April 7** – weekly distribution of all vaccines commences for 6 weeks
- **May 15** – weekly distribution ends

Vaccine Distribution Centre (VDC)

- For information on delivery schedules and order cut-off times refer to your schedule in the online order system.
- There will be **no urgent orders** during the weekly delivery schedule.
- Large orders may be checked and reduced to minimise wastage in the event of a cold chain breach. If you have bookings to support a large order add a note when placing the order. In most instances providers will be consulted prior to an order being reduced.
- Messaging including updates or changes to ordering dates will be posted on the VDC Noticeboard in the online ordering system.

Considerations when ordering

- How many vaccines can your service provide each day?
- How many will you need until the next vaccine delivery?
- Do you have enough space in your vaccine fridge?
- How many 2025 influenza vaccines did you discard at the end of the season?
- Demand significantly decreases after the first 6 weeks.

Cold Chain Management

Immunisation Providers are responsible for ensuring cold chain management practices are maintained. Staff must be aware of the requirements for managing vaccines as per the National Vaccine Storage Guidelines – Strive for 5 and actions to take if a cold chain breach is suspected.

Vaccines must be stored in a purpose-built vaccine fridge between +2 to +8°C and kept in their original packaging to protect from light.

Now is the time to ensure:

- There is a primary and a back-up person allocated responsibility for the cold chain management at your site
- All staff responsible for handling vaccines have received appropriate training, including non-clinical staff who receive vaccine deliveries, clinical staff and anyone who may be required to respond to a vaccine fridge alarm or monitor fridge temperatures.
- You have the required equipment, including data loggers and min/max thermometers in each vaccine fridge. All equipment has been serviced and maintained according to manufacturer recommendations, batteries replaced etc.
- Loggers are being downloaded weekly, and manual temperature charts are completed twice daily.
- An up-to-date cold chain policy is accessible for all staff with correct contact details for the person responsible for vaccine management, and the Immunisation Section, SA Health, along with instructions for downloading the data logger.
- Contact the Immunisation Section via healthimmunisationadmin@sa.gov.au if you need a min/max thermometer for your vaccine fridge
- Complete the vaccine storage **Self Audit**: National Vaccine Storage Guidelines 'Strive for 5' – Vaccine Storage Self Audit

Staff Training

- Short online education module developed for non-clinical and clinical staff - NSW Health Vaccine Storage and Cold Chain Management online training module

Reporting to the Australian Immunisation Register

All Influenza vaccines administered must be reported to the Australian Immunisation Register. Remember to select the 'antenatal' indicator for any vaccine given during pregnancy and also record in the orange pregnancy record.

For education tools for providers including how to access and submit vaccines to the AIR and to request reports, visit the Australian Immunisation Register | AIR.

Reporting to the Immunisation Section

Adverse Event Following Immunisation (AEFI)

An AEFI is a notifiable condition in South Australia. All Immunisation Providers are mandated to report AEFI to the Immunisation Section, except for common or very common AEFI.

For more information refer to the Adverse event following immunisation webpage.

Vaccination administration (program) errors

A program error occurs when a vaccine is given outside the recommended clinical guidelines, including the incorrect vaccine, incorrect age for vaccine, or vaccine given when contraindicated.

Vaccine program errors should be reported to the Immunisation Section during business hours (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm).

Cold Chain Breach (CCB)

Any temperature breach where vaccines have been exposed to temperatures outside 2 to 8°C (except if less than 12°C for less than 15 minutes) should be reported to the Immunisation Section during business hours before discarding any vaccines.

To report AEFI, program errors or a CCB contact the Clinical Advisory Team, Immunisation Section
Telephone 1300 232 272
Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

For more information visit Reporting to the Immunisation Section.

Provider timeline

March

VDC

- Ensure your vaccine account details with the VDC are up to date, including contact details and site / delivery address and opening hours.
- Check the VDC noticeboard for important messages, and your vaccine account for order cut-off and delivery schedules.
- Start planning your flu clinics, considering your age and eligibility cohorts. Review your 2025 season and refer to Considerations when ordering on page 9 to plan your vaccine orders for the first few weeks.
- **Fluad available to order from 12 March** on usual fortnightly schedule.
- Order only the amount of vaccines you reasonably expect to use during this first fortnight based on your patient numbers and 2025 uptake.
- Check the delivery schedule for your scheduled delivery dates. We advise not to book flu clinics until stock has arrived.

Cold Chain Management

- Ensure your cold chain policy is up to date and readily available to staff, and all staff involved with receiving vaccine deliveries, handling or administering vaccines have received appropriate training.
- Complete the Strive for 5 self-audit or the Immunisation Section checklist to ensure your vaccine fridge and temperature monitoring devices are functioning and set-up correctly.
- Ensure you have enough space in your vaccine fridge for the stock you are ordering. Overstocking can cause cold chain breaches.

2025 vaccines

- All 2025 influenza vaccines have expired. Check you have no 2025 influenza vaccines remining in your fridge. All 2025 vaccines should now be discarded and expired stock reported to the VDC via the online vaccine ordering system.

Promotion

- Access the SA Health and Australian Government resources to help promote influenza vaccination at your site.
- Consider how you can promote the free influenza vaccines to your eligible at-risk cohorts, and how you can improve access and uptake, such as family-friendly clinic times.

April

VDC

- Check the VDC noticeboard for important messages, and your vaccine account for order cut-off and delivery schedules.
- **1 April – orders open for all flu vaccines** for people aged 6 months to less than 65 years.
- Weekly vaccine deliveries commence from Tuesday 7 April for 6 weeks.
- Check the delivery schedule for your scheduled delivery dates. We advise not to book flu clinics until stock has arrived.
- Order weekly and only order the amount you reasonably expect to use until your next weekly order, based on patient numbers, your 2025 uptake and considering your stock on hand.

Promotion

- Continue to promote the free influenza vaccines to your eligible at-risk cohorts, and how you can improve vaccine uptake, such as family-friendly clinic times.

May

VDC

- 15 May fortnightly ordering recommences. Check the delivery schedule for your scheduled delivery dates.
- Demand significantly decreases from this time. Please review your 2025 usage, stock on hand, and cohort uptake at your site when ordering more influenza vaccines.

Promotion

- Continue to promote the free influenza vaccines to your eligible at-risk cohorts.

June to September

VDC

- Demand continues to decline from this time. Please review your stock on hand when ordering more influenza vaccines.

Promotion

- Continue to promote the free influenza vaccines to your eligible at-risk cohorts. It's never too late to have the influenza vaccine.

Resources

Hard copy resources for consumers can be ordered via www.poscat.com.au using your vaccine account number as your login and password or download and print off the SA Health website via the Immunisation Resources webpage.

Useful websites for consumers

- sahealth.sa.gov.au/influenza
- sahealth.sa.gov.au/kidsinfluenza
- First Nations people influenza vaccination information and resources – Give flu the boot
- SKAI - Influenza

Resources for Health Professionals

SA Health

- Influenza information for health professionals
- Influenza guidelines and resources for health professionals
- South Australian 2026 Annual Funded Influenza Program schedule
- 2026 Nasal Spray Influenza Vaccination Program – fact sheet for immunisation providers
- Respiratory Dashboard
- Vaccine Storage webpage
- Pharmacist Immunisers
- Vaccine Ordering and Distribution Information (PDF)

National Resources

- ATAGI statement on the administration of seasonal influenza vaccines 2026
- The Australian Government Department of Health - Influenza
- Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA)
- Australian Immunisation Handbook
  - Influenza chapter
  - Vaccination for people who are immunocompromised
- National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS)
  - Influenza Immunisation
- SKAI – Sharing Knowledge About Immunisation
  - Childhood vaccinations - Influenza
  - Pregnancy and newborn vaccinations
  - eLearning - immunisation communication skills

References

1. Childhood vaccination barriers in Australia and strategies to address them, October 2025 Murdoch Children's Research Institute, National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance, and The University of Sydney.
2. CW data report. Includes private and funded vaccines reported to the AIR for the period 1 March to 5 October 2025.
3. AIVC Recommendations for the Composition of Influenza Vaccines for Australia in 2026 Australian Influenza Vaccine Committee, October 2025
4. ATAGI statement on the administration of seasonal influenza vaccines in 2026 Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation, March 2026

QR code link to Influenza information for health professionals webpage

Appendix 1 – 2026 Annual Funded Influenza Program Schedule

Seasonal: 2026 Annual Funded Influenza Program

South Australia Schedule

Funded influenza vaccines should be offered to all those in the following groups:

- All people aged 6 months and older with medical risk factors (listed below)
- All pregnant women
- All Aboriginal** people aged 6 months and older
- All children aged 6 months to less than 5 years
- All people aged 65 years and older
- All people experiencing homelessness***

Medical Risk Factors (refer to the Australian Immunisation Handbook)

Cardiac Disease	Chronic Respiratory Conditions	Chronic Neurological Conditions	Other Risk Conditions
• Congenital heart disease • Congestive heart failure • Coronary artery disease	• Severe asthma • Cystic fibrosis • Bronchiectasis • Suppurative lung disease • Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease • Chronic emphysema	• Hereditary and degenerative CNS diseases • Seizure disorders • Spinal cord injuries • Neuromuscular disorders • Conditions which impair respiratory or airway function	• Diabetes and other metabolic disorders • Renal disease • Haemoglobinopathies • Immunocompromising conditions due to diseases or treatment, asplenia or splenic dysfunction, HIV infection • Long term aspirin therapy in children aged 6 months to 10 years

** The term Aboriginal is inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

*** **Adults and children experiencing homelessness and living in:**

- improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping rough
- supported accommodation for the homeless
- boarding houses or other temporary dwellings
- severely crowded dwellings

IMPORTANT: All vaccine doses administered are to be notified to the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).

All funded influenza vaccines in 2026 are trivalent

Age Group	FluMist® Intranasal spray 0.1ml per nostril (total 0.2mL) Live attenuated	Vaxigrip® 0.5mL (IM) Inactivated	Flucelvax® 0.5mL (IM) Inactivated	Fluad® 0.5mL (IM) Inactivated adjuvanted	Important information
6 months to less than 2 years	✗	✓	✗	✗	**Two doses 4 weeks apart are required for:** • children aged 6 months to less than 2 years of age receiving influenza vaccine for the first time • children aged 2 years to less than 9 years of age with a medical risk condition (as per the Australian Immunisation Handbook) receiving influenza vaccine for the first time • people being vaccinated in their first year post haematopoietic stem cell transplant, solid organ transplant or CAR-T cell therapy.
2 years to less than 5 years	✓	✓	✗	✗	
5 years to less than 65 years	✗	✓	✓	✗	
65 years and older	✗	✗	✗	✓	

For more information

sahealth.sa.gov.au/immunisationprovider

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Government of South Australia
SA Health

Appendix 2 – Nasal Spray Influenza Vaccination Program Fact Sheet for Immunisation Providers

2026 South Australian Nasal Spray Influenza Vaccination Program

Fact sheet for immunisation providers

The National Immunisation Program (NIP) offered by the Australian Government provides free influenza vaccines every year for people who are more at risk of developing complications from influenza, including children 6 months to less than 5 years of age.

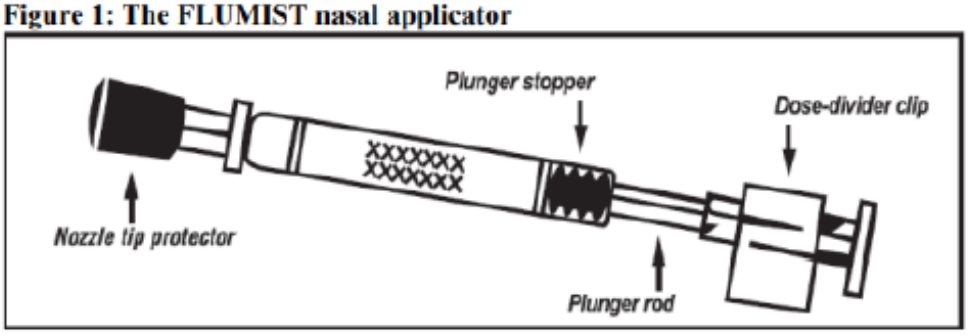
From April 2026 a nasal spray influenza vaccine will be funded in South Australia for eligible children **aged 2 years to less than 5 years** providing a needle-free option for young children.

The nasal spray influenza vaccine

The vaccine FluMist® is a live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV) containing weakened strains of the influenza virus. The LAIV nasal spray has been used since 2003 in the northern hemisphere including in the UK, Europe, the USA and Canada. The millions of doses given have shown the vaccine to be safe and effective, with improved uptake in these countries. Surveillance overseas has found no cases where the LAIV nasal spray has caused influenza.

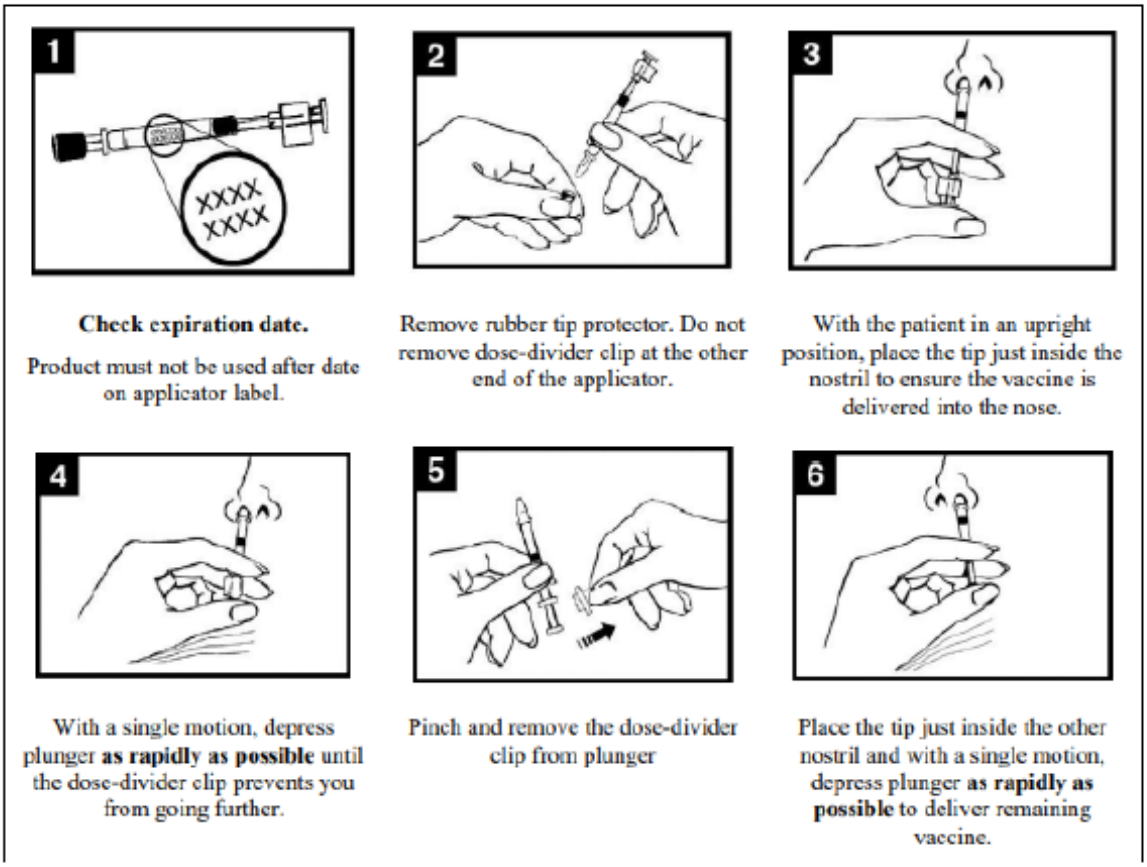
The LAIV nasal spray is supplied in a pre-filled nasal applicator with a dose divider clip. One dose (0.2mL) is administered as two divided sprays of 0.1mL to each nostril. Many children eligible to receive the LAIV nasal spray (children aged 2 years to less than 5 years, and those with no contraindications) will only require one dose. Some children receiving influenza vaccine for the first time require two doses four weeks apart. For more information on dose recommendations refer to the Australian Immunisation Handbook Influenza chapter.

Figure 1: The FLUMIST nasal applicator



Images from the FluMist Product Information on the TGA website.

Figure 2: Instructions of FLUMIST administration



Side effects

The LAIV nasal spray has been shown to be safe and well tolerated, with side effects mild and short-lasting. Expected side effects include headache, tiredness, and a runny or blocked nose. Serious side effects are very rare.

Contraindications

The LAIV nasal spray is contraindicated in people with moderate or severe immunocompromise, people receiving oral salicylate therapy (e.g. aspirin) and people with previous anaphylaxis to an influenza vaccine or any component of an influenza vaccine. Egg allergy is **not** a contraindication to receiving the LAIV nasal spray (or any other influenza vaccine). The LAIV nasal spray is safe in children with asthma/wheeze.

The National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS) recommends vaccination with the LAIV nasal spray should be deferred if the child has a runny or blocked nose as this may affect absorption.

Refer to the Australian Immunisation Handbook for up-to-date advice on contraindications and precautions, including administration of the LAIV nasal spray to people living or working closely with severely immunocompromised people.

Children aged 6 months to less than 2 years and other people unable to receive the LAIV nasal spray should be offered the age-appropriate inactivated influenza vaccine, provided no contraindications exist.

Co-administration

The LAIV nasal spray can be administered at the same time as other vaccines, with no interval required before or after other vaccines, including live vaccines.

Interchangeability of vaccines

People requiring 2 doses of influenza vaccine in the same season can receive any age-appropriate influenza vaccine for the second dose.

Faith-related considerations

The LAIV nasal spray contains porcine gelatin. Gelatin used in vaccines has been altered and purified significantly making it different to the gelatin used in food products. Both Muslim and Jewish leaders have made statements declaring vaccines using porcine gelatin are permitted on religious grounds, however people can consider the inactivated influenza vaccine instead if they prefer.

Ordering the nasal spray influenza vaccine

All immunisation providers registered with the SA Health VDC will be able to order FluMist®.

Doses on hand	Vaccine	Brand	NIP	State Funded	School
	2026 influenza (6 mths to < 5 yrs)	Vaxigrip			
	2026 influenza (2 yrs to < 5 yrs)	FluMist			
	2026 influenza (5 yrs to < 65 yrs)	Flucelvax OR Vaxigrip			
	2026 influenza (65 yrs & older)	Fluad			
	2026 influenza for the homeless	Flucelvax			

Resources

Australian Immunisation Handbook – Influenza chapter

NCIRS Influenza fact sheets

SA Health website sahealth.sa.gov.au/influenza

For more information contact the Immunisation Section Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.
Phone: 1300 232 272
Email: healthimmunisation@sa.gov.au