

vaccination-information-letter

Letter to staff members, and parents and carers of students in Queensland schools

Dear Parent, Carer or Staff Member

As you may be aware, a national program to vaccinate Australians to protect against Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 Influenza Virus, (Human Swine Flu) commenced on 30 September 2009.

The initial phase of the vaccination program is aimed at protecting people who are most vulnerable to severe complications from infection with the pandemic influenza virus. The Commonwealth, in conjunction with States and Territories, are strongly recommending vaccination for people aged 10 years and over who are in one of the following groups:

- individuals with chronic disease (eg. heart, liver, renal, lung, kidney, neurological disease)
- individuals with respiratory disease (eg. asthma)
- individuals with immunosuppression
- obese individuals with a body mass index (BMI) of over 35
- children over the age of 10 attending special schools (including students with special needs in regular school settings)
- Indigenous Australians
- pregnant women
- parents and carers of children aged between 0 – 6 months
- healthcare workers.

At this stage vaccination is only available to people 10 years of age and over. It is anticipated that the data from the clinical trials for children will be available late October. Vaccination for children will commence some time after this.

Although the focus is on protecting those in the vulnerable groups, the vaccine is available to all those wanting to protect themselves in the community. Should you have any questions or concerns about your or your child's eligibility for the vaccination, please contact your General Practitioner (GP).

I urge you to visit your local GP to receive a free vaccination to help protect against this disease. The cost of the vaccine is free, although GP's may charge a consultation fee. General Practice Queensland (GPQ) has advised that most GPs will bulk bill for consultations solely for the purpose of pandemic vaccination.

If you require further information on how to obtain the vaccine, please contact your local GP or visit the Queensland Health vaccination website <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/swineflu/html/vacc.asp>

Yours sincerely

Dr Christine Selvey
Chief Health Officer

Queensland Health

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Authorised by Dr Russ Schedlich, Deputy State Health Incident Controller

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