

2.56.006 IRT Vaccination Factsheet for Associated Providers

Although vaccination is not mandatory, IRT recognises that it significantly reduces the spread of disease and the severity of illness, hospitalisations and death.

This factsheet outlines the vaccinations strongly recommend for people working in aged care services to help protect vulnerable residents and maintain a safe workplace.

The following vaccinations are strongly recommended when working in aged care services:

- COVID-19
- Influenza
- Shingles (Herpes Zoster)
- Pneumococcal
- Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR).

COVID-19 VACCINATION

COVID-19 is a highly contagious respiratory illness caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. It can lead to serious illness, hospitalisation and ongoing health complications.

COVID-19 vaccines are free for everyone aged 6 months and older who are eligible in Australia, as per the [Australian COVID-19 Vaccination Policy](#).

You do not need a Medicare card to receive the vaccine. The vaccine is available from:

- local doctors/general practices
- community health centres
- Aboriginal health services
- participating pharmacies

To find a vaccination provider and book an appointment, visit the COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic Finder: <https://covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au/booking/>

The clinic finder is also available in 15 languages.

For further information on COVID-19 vaccinations, visit: <https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/covid-19-vaccines>

INFLUENZA VACCINES

Influenza (flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It can cause severe illness and complications, particularly in young children, older adults and people with certain medical conditions.

Influenza vaccines are given each year to protect against the most common strains of the virus. The strains can change from year to year so the vaccines may be updated from one season to the next. It is therefore important to receive the influenza vaccination annually.

The influenza vaccine is recommended for everyone aged 6 months and over. It not only protects you but also helps protect those around you.

It is available free under the [National Immunisation Program](#) for people most at risk, including:

- children 6 months to less than 5 years
- pregnant women
- people aged 65 and over
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- people with certain medical conditions.

IRT also offers a free annual influenza vaccination to all employees, volunteers, and Tier 1 and Tier 2 associated providers at the start of the influenza season (April to June) via our onsite vaccination clinics. Associated providers should refer to the *2.56 IRT Employee Vaccination Policy* to confirm their tier classification and understand what applies to them.

The vaccine is also available from:

- local doctors/general practices
- local council immunisation clinics (available in some states and territories)
- community health centres
- Aboriginal health services
- participating pharmacies

For further information on Influenza vaccinations please visit: <https://www.health.gov.au/influenza-vaccination>

SHINGLES (HERPES ZOSTER) VACCINATION

Shingles is caused by reactivation of the varicella-zoster virus (the virus that causes chickenpox). It can lead to severe nerve pain and complications.

Under the [National Immunisation Program](#), the shingles vaccine (Shingrix®) is free for:

- people aged 65 years and over
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50 years and over
- people aged 18 years and over who are immunocompromised (with certain medical conditions)

The vaccine is given as a two-dose course.

Shingles vaccines are available from:

- local doctors/general practices
- community health centres
- Aboriginal health services
- participating pharmacies

For further information please visit:

<https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/shingles-herpes-zoster-immunisation>

PNEUMOCOCCAL VACCINATION

Pneumococcal disease can cause serious infections such as pneumonia, meningitis and bloodstream infections.

Under the [National Immunisation Program](#) pneumococcal vaccination is free for:

- children under 5 years of age (as part of the routine childhood schedule)
- people aged 70 years and over
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (additional recommendations apply)
- people with certain medical risk conditions

The number of doses required depends on age and medical risk factors.

Pneumococcal vaccines are available from:

- local doctors/general practices
- local council immunisation clinics
- community health centres
- Aboriginal health services
- participating pharmacies

For further information please visit:

<https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/pneumococcal-immunisation>

MMR (MEASLES, MUMPS, RUBELLA) VACCINATION

The MMR vaccine protects against measles, mumps and rubella. These are highly contagious viral diseases that can cause serious complications.

Under the [National Immunisation Program](#), MMR vaccination is provided free for adult people born during or after 1966 who have not received two doses.

Adults unsure of their vaccination history are encouraged to check their immunisation record or speak with their doctor.

MMR vaccines are available from:

- local doctors/general practices
- local council immunisation clinics
- community health centres
- Aboriginal health services

For further information please visit:

<https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/measles-mumps-rubella-mmr-immunisation>

If you do not have a Medicare card and your vaccination provider has recommended that you receive a vaccination, you may have the option to purchase it. Please consult your vaccination provider for further information.

VACCINE SAFETY AND SIDE EFFECTS

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) monitors vaccines in Australia for safety and effectiveness. All vaccines used in Australia are rigorously assessed to ensure their benefits outweigh any risks.

It is much safer to be vaccinated than to contract the disease.

You may have mild side effects after vaccination – this is normal. Most side effects are mild, temporary and part of the immune system's natural response to the vaccine.

Common reactions include:

- pain, swelling, or redness at the injection site
- headache, fatigue, mild fever
- muscle aches or feeling faint.

Seek medical attention if you experience severe, persistent or unusual symptoms following vaccination.

VACCINATION RECORDS

Your vaccination records are on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR). You can access your immunisation history statement in these ways:

- Logging in to my.gov.au via your Medicare account
- Using the Express Plus Medicare mobile app
- Calling Services Australia on 1800 653 809
- Asking your doctor or pharmacist for a printout.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

This factsheet provides general information only and does not replace medical advice. Please consult your doctor or qualified healthcare provider for advice specific to your individual circumstances.