



25th September 2024

Circular Number: NCO-36-2024

RE: COVID-19 and Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Programme Autumn Winter 2024/2025

Dear Pharmacist,

I refer to Circular [NCO-33-2024](#), dated 19th August 2024, which outlined plans for the Autumn / Winter Vaccination Programme 2024/2025.

The autumn / winter campaign commences on 1st October 2024.

Vaccines & Ordering

- Vaccine orders commenced as follows:
 - Comirnaty JN.1 age 12+ and Quadrivalent Influenza Vaccine (QIV) on 9th September
 - Fluenz nasal spray vaccine (LAIV) on 16th September
- All COVID-19 and flu vaccines can be ordered online from <https://www.ordervaccines.ie/>. All vaccine deliveries are fortnightly. No more than 3 weeks stock of vaccines should be held at any time.
- Any expired stock should be returned to NCCS using the normal process – see <https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/hcpinfo/vaccineordering/vaccreturn.pdf>.
- Information resources for COVID-19 and influenza vaccination programmes will be based on orders and will be delivered with the vaccines. COVID-19 PIL and record card must be given to those who receive a COVID-19 vaccination.

For any queries relating to vaccine allocations, orders or deliveries, please contact NCCS customer services at: vaccines@udd.ie or 01 4637770.

Clinical Information for Vaccinators

An extensive range of materials to support vaccinators has been developed by the National Immunisation

Office. All vaccinators should be familiar with the updated training and guidance documentation before commencing vaccination, which can be found at the following links:

- [Vaccine Information for Health Professionals](#)
- [Immunisation Bulletins](#)
- [Influenza Vaccination Programme 2024/25](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccine Information for Health Professionals](#)
- [HSELand](#)

For any clinical queries please contact immunisation@hse.ie.



Operational Guidance

The National COVID-19 and Influenza Vaccination Programme Operational Guidance for Community Pharmacy has been developed and circulated via Healthmail, and is also available to view or download on the [Information for Community Pharmacies](#) section of the VPCC webpage.

Children's LAIV (Live Attenuated Influenza Vaccine) Programme

The primary pathway for provision of children's flu vaccine is via GPs and Community Pharmacies. GPs and Pharmacies have engaged with mainstream primary schools to offer the free LAIV nasal spray to children in all year groups during the upcoming Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Programme which will commence on 7th October 2024.

HSE vaccination teams will be offering LAIV nasal flu vaccine to children in Junior Infants in some mainstream primary schools not covered by GPs or Pharmacies, and to children in primary-age special schools across Ireland for the 2024/2025 season.

The *Toolkit to Support the Administration of Flu Vaccination to Children in Primary Schools or Community Settings by Primary Care* can be accessed at: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/hcpinfo/fluinfo/>.

If your pharmacy is providing LAIV to children in primary schools, please ensure to enter the vaccination records promptly to avoid another vaccine being administered in error by a different provider.

Eligible children who are contraindicated or unable to tolerate LAIV and are suitable for a QIV injection may avail of their vaccine from their GP.

Recording Vaccines

To ensure the patient vaccination record is correct, take a moment to check the information entered into your PharmaVax. In particular:

- Take care when running combined flu and COVID-19 clinics, to ensure that the records entered for each patient are correct and reflect the vaccine(s) administered, particularly if only 1 vaccine was administered.
- Check the recommended interval has elapsed since last vaccination or COVID-19 infection.
 - For recommended intervals, please refer to [Clinical Guidance COVID-19](#).
 - For confirmation of the date of last vaccine dose, a 'Vaccination History Search' facility is available via the HSE's 'Health Provider Portal'. Further information is available in the Operational Guidance.
- Select the correct vaccine name e.g. Comirnaty® JN.1 Vaccine is the recommended vaccine for booster dose.
- Check the correct batch number and use-before date is entered.
- An update to the Medicinal Products (Prescription and Control of Supply) Regulations 2003 to 2024 has been made by Statutory Instrument 458 of 2024. This update removes the obligation for pharmacists to notify a patient's GP of the administration of a flu vaccine by a pharmacist working in a community pharmacy setting. It also amends the requirements in relation to record keeping for vaccine administrations.



Fees

The existing fee rates are being maintained for the administration of the COVID-19 and Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Programme for winter 2024/2025.

- The rate to be paid for COVID-19 vaccinations administered by pharmacists will remain at €25 per dose;
- The fee of €15 will be maintained for all QIV Influenza vaccinations administered to patients in the recommended HSE patient groups (GMS and non-GMS);
- In addition to this, each pharmacy will be eligible for a further payment of €100 for every 10 unique patients to whom he/she administers one of the QIV Influenza vaccines;
- A fee of €20 will apply for vaccinations administered using the (nasal) Live Attenuated Influenza Vaccine (LAIV) for eligible children aged from 2 to 17 years inclusive;
- In addition, each pharmacy will be eligible for a further payment of €150 for every 10 unique patients aged from 2 to 17 years inclusive to whom he/she administers the LAIV.

Conclusion

I would like once again to express my sincere gratitude to Community Pharmacies for the efficient manner in which the COVID-19 and Influenza Vaccination Programmes have been delivered to date.

I would also like to wish you and your team every success in delivering the seasonal vaccinations to your patients over the coming months.

Please be assured of the HSE's continued support at this time and if you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact the Vaccinations and Primary Care Contractor Team on 021-4928787 or by email vaccinations.primarycarecontractors@hse.ie

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pat Healy', written over a horizontal line.

Pat Healy
National Director
National Services and Schemes