



Clinical Practice Procedures: Drug administration/ QAS employee influenza vaccination

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Date	April, 2023
Purpose	To ensure a consistent procedural approach to QAS employee influenza vaccination.
Scope	Applies to Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) clinical staff.
Health care setting	Pre-hospital assessment and treatment.
Population	Applies to all ages unless stated otherwise.
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QAS employee influenza vaccination

April, 2023

The influenza virus is easily spread and can cause serious morbidity in healthy individuals. Influenza accounts for \$85M in healthcare costs, 1.5 million lost work days, 18 000 hospitalisations, 300 000 GP consultations and around 3000 deaths in Australia each year. There are three types of influenza viruses that infect humans – A, B and C. Influenza A and B circulate globally and cause annual seasonal flu epidemics.^[1]

Influenza viruses are transmitted via respiratory secretions such as airborne droplets from sneezing or coughing, or direct person-to-person contact. They are highly contagious in enclosed spaces.

Influenza causes fever, muscle aches, fatigue, chills, headache and rhinorrhoea but can progress to pneumonia, myopericarditis, as well as multi-organ dysfunction. The incubation period is 1–4 days, with an abrupt onset of symptoms.

Those at increased risk for a severe infection are: adults aged over 65 years; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; children under 6 years; pregnant women; individuals with chronic medical conditions; individuals with immunosuppressive conditions such as HIV/AIDS and individuals with malignancy receiving chemotherapy.^[1]

Seasonal Influenza vaccines are developed every year based on the prevalent strains, particularly those affecting the northern hemisphere in the preceding 6 to 12 months; therefore vaccination is required to be administered annually. Vaccination has been proven to reduce the severity and duration of illness and the need for hospitalisation.^[2]

Indications

Note: *Influenza vaccines may only be administered by paramedics with specific approval of the QAS Medical Director.*

- For the prevention of seasonal influenza caused by the influenza virus types A and B in QAS employees.

Contraindications

- Allergy and/or Adverse Drug Reaction to an influenza vaccine and/or components
- Known allergy to eggs or egg products

Refer to General Practitioner for any of the following:

- Current immune-oncologic therapy
- Hypersensitivity to the influenza vaccine and/or its components (as listed on the Consumer Medicines Information)
- Current episode of febrile illness (temperature greater than 38.5°C) or acute systematic illness.
- Bleeding disorders or current anti-coagulant therapy
- History of Guillain-barre syndrome

Complications

- Allergic reaction
- Discomfort, redness and swelling at the injection site
- Headache
- Malaise
- Mild fever

Procedure – QAS employee influenza vaccination

1. Consider infection prevention and PPE as per *The Australian Immunisation Handbook*.^[2]
2. Confirm the staff member has completed the *QAS Internal Influenza Vaccination Form*.
3. Confirm the staff member is suitable for QAS administered influenza vaccine (refer to *DTP: Influenza vaccine 2023 – QAS employee*).
4. Administer approved influenza vaccine as per *DTP: Influenza vaccine 2023 – QAS employee*.
5. Provide post vaccination advice and instructions to the recipient.
6. Document the vaccination administration on the *2023 QAS Internal Influenza Vaccination Form*.
7. Recipients must be observed by a Registered Paramedic or Registered Nurse for 15 minutes after receiving the vaccination.

Additional information

- Influenza vaccine must be stored refrigerated and in accordance with *Strive for Five National Vaccine Storage Guidelines*.^[3]
- Vaccine cooler temperature must be checked every 15 minutes for the first two hours and then every 30 minutes for the duration of the immunisation session.
- Influenza vaccination before the winter season commences ensures people are protected during Australia's peak influenza season which is usually between June and September.
- QAS Paramedics are not authorised to administer vaccines to members of the community.
- All adverse events must be documented on an *Adverse Event Following Immunisation Reporting Form* and immediately forwarded to QAS.InfectionControl@ambulance.qld.gov.au