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The banner features the Government of South Australia logo on the left, the text 'OFFICE OF THE CHIEF PHARMACIST UPDATE' in large white letters on a blue background, and contact information for Naomi Burgess, Chief Pharmacist, Department for Health and Wellbeing, on the right. The website address SAHEALTH.SA.GOV.AU is at the bottom.

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Vaccine Administration Code and travel vaccines

Following the recent extended range of vaccines approved for South Australian pharmacists under the Vaccine Administration Code, clarification has been sought on vaccines for travel purposes.

As published on the [SA Health website](#), under the Code, currently vaccines **cannot be administered** for the purposes of travel or, for the management of a tetanus prone wound. This applies to all health professionals vaccinating under the Code.

Vaccines cannot be administered under the [Vaccine Administration Code](#) (the Code) if they are not given as part of a specified program as published on the SA Health website. For further information please refer also to the [Vaccine Administration Code: Frequently Asked Questions](#).

Administration of NIP Influenza Vaccinations

Since 2022, in South Australia pharmacists are approved to administer influenza vaccine under the Commonwealth National Immunisation Program (NIP) to the following patient groups:

- People aged 65 years and older
- Pregnant women
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons aged 5 years and older

Fees for administration of NIP influenza vaccinations

Whilst the NIP vaccine is provided free of charge, pharmacist immunisers may charge patients a fee to cover any costs associated with the administration of the influenza vaccination (e.g., booking or administration fee). If they choose to do so, pharmacists are required to advise their patients about the availability of free vaccination services through other providers, e.g., bulk-billing general practitioners, prior to administering the vaccine.

SA Health's evaluation of last year's flu vaccination rollout, which included covering the service fee for administration in pharmacies and community programs, found there was only a three per cent increased uptake during the three months of the program, when it was extended as a special measure due to SA's first winter with both COVID and flu.

Following the recent announcement by the Federal Health Minister in regard to free access to NIP vaccines in pharmacies from 2024, SA Health will work with the

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Commonwealth to understand the details of the program and to implement any required local changes over the coming months.

Live Vaccine Safety

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has recently reminded health professionals about live vaccine safety, highlighting that live vaccines should not be given to people who are significantly immunocompromised or pregnant. This is particularly the case for the herpes zoster (Zostavax®) and the Japanese encephalitis (Imojev®) vaccines as incorrect use continues to be reported.

While not all reports of inadvertent use are associated with an adverse event, the safety update provides a timely reminder to healthcare professionals considering live vaccines for patients.

The [TGA Medicines Safety](#) Update states: “If you are uncertain about the degree of immunocompromise in a patient, do not give them a live vaccine and seek specialist advice”.

Detailed information including [tools to assess the severity of immunocompromise](#), are available from the Australian Immunisation Handbook.

Supporting resources

- [National Immunisation Program Schedule](#)
- [2023 Influenza Vaccination Program Advice for Vaccination Providers](#)
- [Live vaccines – what are the contraindications?](#)

Please forward this update to any colleagues who may not have received it and contact us at Health.OfficeoftheChiefPharmacist@sa.gov.au to be added to our mailing list or with any other enquiries.

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