

# WELSH HEALTH CIRCULAR



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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**STATUS: ACTION**

**CATEGORY: PUBLIC HEALTH**

**Title:** Ordering adjuvanted flu vaccine for the 2018-19 season

**Date of Expiry / Review** N/A

**For Action by:**

General Practitioners  
Pharmacists  
Chief Executives, Health Boards/Trusts

**For information to:**

Medical Directors, Health Boards/Trusts  
Nurse Executive Directors, Health Boards/Trusts  
Directors of Public Health, Health Boards/Trusts  
Immunisation Leads, Health Boards  
Immunisation Coordinators, Health Boards  
Executive Director of Public Health, Public Health Wales  
Head VPD Programme, Public Health Wales  
Royal College of GPs  
Royal College of Nursing  
British Dental Association  
Royal Pharmaceutical Society  
Community Pharmacy Wales  
British Medical Association, Wales  
General Practitioner Council, Wales

**Sender:**

Chief Medical Officer for Wales

**DHSS Welsh Government Contact(s) :**

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**Enclosure(s):** None

Dear Colleague,

Following Welsh Health Circular 2017-052 issued on 29 November 2017, please find attached updated information on ordering and delivery arrangements for adjuvanted influenza vaccine for the 2018-19 season.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Frank Atherton', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

**Dr Frank Atherton**  
**Chief Medical Officer / Medical Director NHS Wales**

## **ORDERING ADJUVANTED TRIVALENT FLU VACCINE FOR 2018-19**

### **1. Which flu vaccine should I be ordering for those aged 65 years and over for 2018-19?**

On 29 November 2017, Welsh Health Circular [2017- 052] advised that GP practices and community pharmacy providers should offer the **adjuvanted trivalent influenza vaccine (aTIV)** to all those aged 65 and over in 2018-19. This is the most effective vaccine currently available for this group. This is based on current advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) published in the “Green Book” in December 2017.

### **2. Which flu vaccine should I be ordering for those aged under 65 years for 2018-19?**

On 29 November 2017, Welsh Health Circular [2017-052] advised that GP practices and community pharmacy providers should offer adults aged under 65 in clinical at-risk groups the **quadrivalent influenza vaccine (QIV)** which protects against four strains of flu. This reflects updated Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) advice on QIV that was published in the “Green Book” in October 2017.

### **3. Why is aTIV preferred to a quadrivalent vaccine for people aged 65 years and over?**

In those people aged 65 and over, aTIV has been shown to be more efficacious than non-adjuvanted vaccine. aTIV is therefore preferable to a non-adjuvanted QIV in this age group. The JCVI concluded non-adjuvanted TIV showed no significant effectiveness for all types of influenza in those aged 75 and over. There is currently no adjuvanted quadrivalent vaccine available for use in the UK. In other eligible populations aged under 65, the quadrivalent influenza vaccine has been shown to be more effective compared to the trivalent influenza vaccine; aTIV is not licensed for those aged under 65.

### **4. When will adjuvanted trivalent flu vaccine (aTIV) be delivered?**

Seqirus, the manufacturer of aTIV has confirmed that they can supply enough vaccine for the population aged 65 years and over in the UK. To meet the additional demand resulting from using the most effective vaccine, that is aTIV, the manufacturer has increased planned production and **extended the window for ordering to 12 April 2018.**

Delivery to providers across the UK will be phased; 4 million doses will be available for delivery in September, 2 million doses by mid-October and 3 million doses in early November. GP practices and pharmacies will need to order in line with an accurate forecast of the vaccines needed to cover the population aged 65 years and over to avoid wastage of vaccines by over-ordering. From May onwards, Seqirus will communicate to all customers more precise details around their expected volume by drop (month) to help GPs/pharmacies to plan clinics. The start of the influenza season varies each year – usually from December onwards. It is better to be vaccinated as early

in the vaccine campaign as possible, bearing in mind it takes two weeks to develop an immune response. In Wales, data shows that from 2010-11 to 2016-17 the mean week when influenza like illness consultations in general practice began to rise was week 50 (2<sup>nd</sup> week in December).

### **5. What is the proposed delivery schedule for adjuvanted trivalent flu vaccine (aTIV) in 2018?**

The window for ordering has been extended to 12 April 2018. The manufacturer of aTIV has advised UK deliveries will be made during September, October and early November.

### **6. How do I plan my clinics when all the vaccine is not available in September?**

Phased deliveries will require additional planning but will ensure that patients benefit from the most effective vaccines, in good time. We will aim to provide additional information once ordering is complete and further information on the delivery is available.

### **7. Would it be better to immunise with QIV instead of waiting for supplies of aTIV?**

Given the clear evidence about the potential clinical benefits, aTIV is a more appropriate choice than QIV vaccine for older people and is the clear recommendation to GP practices and community pharmacy providers based on JCVI advice.

### **8. In what presentation will aTIV be supplied?**

Due to the increased volume of aTIV to be produced, the manufacturer will, for the 2018-19 season only, deliver most of the supply in pre-filled syringes (Luer Lock) with a separate needle which will require attachment prior to administration of the vaccine. From the 2019-20 season onwards, aTIV will be supplied in the more usual presentation of a pre-filled syringe with an attached needle. The vaccine can be ordered in packs of 10 and there is a limited amount of single packs.

### **9. People who have their 65th birthday before 31st March 2019 will be eligible for influenza vaccine so may not be 65 when they are immunised, which vaccine should they have?**

It is appropriate to offer aTIV "off label" to those reaching 65 before 31st March 2019 and who are thus eligible to receive influenza vaccine under the current definition of the 'over 65' group. Although aTIV is not licensed in those less than 65 years of age, "off label" use is an option. Patient Group Direction (PGD) templates issued by PHE have been adopted for use in Wales as the basis for drafting health board PGDs (see <http://www.immunisation.wales.nhs.uk/pgds-psds>)

**10. The Welsh Health Circular [2017-052] recommended QIV for ‘under 65s in clinical risk groups’, does this apply to other eligible groups such as unpaid carers?**

Yes, other eligible groups such as unpaid carers (provided they are under 65 and therefore not also eligible for aTIV) should be offered QIV as they are likely to derive greater clinical benefit from this compared to TIV.

**11. Which vaccines are being used for children in 2018-19?**

GPs in Wales procure injectable vaccines for children who are unable to receive centrally supplied Fluenz Tetra®, which is the vaccine of choice. The licence has recently changed on two quadrivalent inactivated vaccines and they are now licensed from 6 months of age.