



FAQs - Restrictions on entry into and visitors to aged care facilities

Influenza vaccinations

All states and territories have released directions that set out requirements with regard to entry into and visitors to residential aged care facilities. These directions give effect within each jurisdiction to the decisions made by National Cabinet that were **announced** by the Prime Minister on 18 March 2020.

The state and territory directions set out specific requirements in relation to influenza vaccinations.

The directions are published on state/territory government websites as follows:

- **New South Wales**
- **Victoria**
- **Queensland**
- **South Australia**
- **Western Australia**
- **Tasmania**
- **Australian Capital Territory**
- **Northern Territory**

What happens if staff are not able to be vaccinated due to cultural, religious or health reasons?

Tasmania and New South Wales do allow some exemptions to the influenza immunisation requirements.

Residential aged care providers may otherwise need to redeploy staff that are not able to be vaccinated.

Does everyone entering a residential aged care service need to be vaccinated?

Yes. This applies to **staff, visitors, health practitioners, volunteers and others** (for example, cleaners, tradesman, gardeners, maintenance staff).

Do residential aged care providers still need to provide free influenza vaccinations to staff and volunteers?

Yes. All Australian Government subsidised residential aged care providers continue to be required to have in place an influenza vaccination program offering staff and volunteers free access to annual influenza vaccinations at the provider's cost.

What are aged care providers' obligations regarding persons entering the service?

Under the state and territory directions, aged care providers are required to take all reasonable steps to ensure that a person does not enter or remain on the premises if they do

not meet the influenza vaccination (and other) requirements set out in the relevant state and territory directions.

How will aged care providers know whether persons seeking to enter a service on an ad hoc basis (eg tradesmen) have been vaccinated?

Approved providers should **seek appropriate evidence of immunisation status** from individuals seeking to enter the service. Appropriate evidence may be a statement or record from a health practitioner; or an immunisation history statement available from Medicare online or the Express Plus Medicare mobile app.

Will aged care providers need to substantiate that a visitor has been vaccinated and keep records?

Approved providers should **seek appropriate evidence of immunisation status** from individuals seeking to enter the service. Appropriate evidence may be a statement or record from a health practitioner; or an immunisation history statement available from Medicare online or the Express Plus Medicare mobile app. Approved providers may also consider maintaining records to support effective administration and to substantiate their compliance with this requirement.

How will compliance with these requirements be assessed?

State and territory law enforcement agencies will enforce these directions. Persons who fail to comply with any of the directions could face penalties including fines for individuals and for bodies corporate.

Will residents still have the right to refuse vaccination?

While vaccination for all residents is important to protect themselves and others against influenza, residents have the right to refuse vaccinations.

Who can administer an influenza vaccination?

Influenza vaccinations prescribed by an authorised prescriber can be administered by the prescriber or a number of other health professionals including nurses, doctors or Aboriginal health professionals.

In some circumstances flu vaccinations can also be administered by pharmacists where they have undertaken the appropriate education and training and are authorised to do so. All health professionals are required to practice in accordance with state/territory legislation and relevant policy.