



Public Health  
England



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care



NHS England gateway reference: 08529  
Public Health England gateway reference: 2018627

20 November 2018

Dear Colleagues

### **Vaccines for 2019/20 seasonal flu vaccination programme**

We appreciate the hard work you put into the flu vaccination programme, immunising more than 10 million children and adults each year, achieving some of the best uptake rates in Europe in 2017/18, averting tens of thousands of hospital admissions, and saving thousands of lives every year.

This letter is intended to give providers of seasonal flu immunisation and other stakeholders, preliminary information on the recommended vaccines for the **2019/20 seasonal flu vaccination programme**. Seasonal flu vaccination is an important public health intervention and each year we strive to improve upon the protection it provides.

**Both of the vaccines that were recommended for the 2018/19 season will continue to be recommended for next year. Both vaccines are currently licensed and available to order for use in the United Kingdom (UK):**

- the **quadrivalent inactivated vaccine (QIV)** will continue to be recommended for 18 to 64 year olds in clinical at-risk groups and other eligible groups, including frontline health and social care workers.
- the **adjuvanted trivalent inactivated vaccine (aTIV)** will continue to be recommended for individuals aged 65 years and over.

**As in the 2018/19 season, standard trivalent vaccines (TIVe, previously known as TIV) are not to be used in any age or clinical at-risk group.**

We also anticipate that two further products will be licensed within the ordering window for the 2019/20 flu season. The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) reviewed the latest evidence on influenza vaccines and recently published advice, including reference to two currently unlicensed products. All the currently licensed flu vaccines are cultured on eggs, but JCVI advised that a cell-based QIV will be suitable for use both in those aged 18 to 64 years and in those aged 65 years and over. Going forward the standard QIV will be referred to as **QIVe (cultured on eggs)** and the new quadrivalent vaccine will be referred to as **QIVc (cultured on mammalian cells)**. JCVI also considered evidence on

a high dose trivalent vaccine (TIV-HD), and advised that this will be suitable for those aged 65 years and over.

**Children (including those for whom there are contraindications for use of LAIV)**

- Live attenuated quadrivalent influenza vaccine (LAIV) is the vaccine of choice for eligible children aged two years to 17 years;
- Children who are in clinical at-risk groups should be offered a suitable quadrivalent inactivated vaccine if medically contraindicated to live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV);
- Children aged 6 months to under 2 years who are in clinical at-risk groups should be offered a suitable quadrivalent inactivated vaccine.

Public Health England will continue to procure and supply vaccines for all children aged six months to 17 years.

**For adults aged 18 to 64 years in clinical at-risk groups (including pregnant women) or other eligible groups, the JCVI has advised the following vaccines are suitable for use:**

- Standard egg-grown quadrivalent vaccines (QIVe), which are currently licensed;
- Cell-grown quadrivalent vaccine (QIVc), which is not currently licensed, but expected December 2018.

These vaccines are considered equally suitable for use in adults under 65 years of age and in a clinical at-risk group / other eligible group (subject to licensed age indications). These vaccines are preferable to standard trivalent egg based influenza vaccines (TIVe).

**For the 65 and over age group, the JCVI has advised the following vaccines are suitable for use:**

- Adjuvanted trivalent vaccine (aTIV), which is currently licensed;
- Cell-grown quadrivalent vaccine (QIVc), which is not currently licensed but expected December 2018;
- High-dose trivalent vaccine (TIV-HD), which is not currently licensed but expected December 2018.

These vaccines are considered equally suitable for use in those aged 65 years and over, and are preferable to standard egg based trivalent and egg based quadrivalent influenza vaccines (TIVe/QIVe).

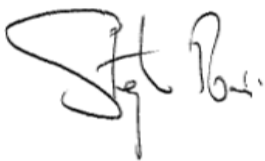
The JCVI statement is available here <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/joint-committee-on-vaccination-and-immunisation>. Please see Appendix A for a summary table and some frequently asked questions.

Once licences are granted and list prices of the new vaccines have been agreed, NHS England will write to you again confirming the full recommendations for the 2019/20 flu programme.


**What should you do now?**

Please begin ordering currently **licensed** vaccines as set out above; ordering of these licensed vaccines should not be unnecessarily delayed. For the new, currently **unlicensed** vaccines, please wait for confirmation from NHS England that they are eligible for reimbursement before ordering.

Yours faithfully



Professor Stephen Powis  
NHS England  
National Medical Director



Professor Paul Cosford  
Public Health England  
Medical Director and Director  
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Professor Dame Sally Davies  
Chief Medical Officer for  
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**Appendix A**  
**Summary of JCVI flu vaccine advice**

Product	Suitable for use in clinical at-risk / eligible adults under 65 years	Suitable for use in adults 65 years and over	Licensure status
Standard trivalent vaccines (TIVe)	NO	NO	Licensed
Standard egg-grown quadrivalent vaccines (QIVe)	YES	NO	Licensed
Adjuvanted trivalent vaccine (aTIV)	NO	YES	Licensed (for those aged 65 years and over)
Cell-grown quadrivalent vaccine (QIVc)	YES	YES	Not yet licensed; expected late 2018; list price not yet announced.
High-dose trivalent vaccine (TIV-HD)	NO	YES	Not yet licensed; expected late 2018; list price not yet announced.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Can I order the high-dose trivalent inactivated influenza vaccine (TIV-HD) or quadrivalent influenza cell culture vaccine (QIVc) now?**

No. Neither of these products has a licence for use in the UK yet. NHS England will write to you again later this year confirming the full recommendations for the 2019/20 flu programme when these products are licensed and the list prices are confirmed.

**Will I be asked to change my vaccine order?**

No. Based on the JCVI statement the new vaccines are not recommended in preference to the vaccines recommended in 2018/19 but as alternatives for the relevant age groups. QIVc is considered equally suitable to aTIV for those 65 years old and over and equally suitable to QIVe for those aged less than 65 years of age and in a clinical at-risk group / other eligible group (subject to licensed age indications). TIV-HD is equally suitable to aTIV and QIVc, for use in those aged 65 years and over.

**Can I order a standard egg cultured quadrivalent vaccine (QIVe) for my patients aged 65 years and over?**

No. You should not do so, as standard egg cultured quadrivalent vaccine (QIVe) is not recommended for adults aged 65 years and over. Should QIVc become available for ordering for 2019/20, this is suitable for those aged 65 years and over and could be ordered for that age group. General Practices and other providers should take special care not to inadvertently order QIVe for adults 65 years of age and over.

**Where can I find out more about the high-dose trivalent inactivated influenza vaccine (TIV-HD)?**

This was discussed at the JCVI meeting in June. The minutes for JCVI and sub-committee meetings are available through the JCVI webpage at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/joint-committee-on-vaccination-and-immunisation>

**Where can I find out more about the quadrivalent influenza cell culture vaccine (QIVc)?**

This was discussed at the JCVI meeting in October. The minutes are available on the JCVI webpage <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/joint-committee-on-vaccination-and-immunisation>