

Japanese Encephalitis Vaccination Update for Primary Care Providers

Please distribute to all staff in your facility

1. Japanese encephalitis virus (JEV) vaccine eligibility has been expanded to people in **14 additional Local Government Areas (LGAs)**.
2. Offer appropriate vaccination to eligible patients, including in new eligibility LGAs (see below). Refer to information available in the [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#) regarding vaccine types.
3. Check patients vaccinated with JEspect have received two primary course doses.
4. Advise patients on the importance of routine mosquito bite prevention to prevent any mosquito borne diseases.

What are the changes to Japanese Encephalitis vaccination in NSW?

People at most risk of JEV in 14 additional LGAs are eligible for free vaccine. This is in addition to the previous 41 LGAs included. From 28 November, this includes:

People aged 2 months or older who live or routinely work in any of the eligible Local Government Areas (LGAs) of high JEV concern (Box 1, new LGAs in **bold**) **AND**:

- regularly spend time outdoors (no time limit) placing them at risk of mosquito bites, **OR**
- are experiencing homelessness, **OR**
- are living in conditions with limited mosquito protection (e.g. tents, caravans, dwellings with no insect screens), **OR**
- are engaged in prolonged outdoor recovery efforts (clean up) following floods.

There is no change to people eligible for free JE vaccine owing to occupational risk across Australia. For the complete list of eligible vaccine groups, see the [NSW Health Japanese Encephalitis vaccine webpage](#).

What is risk of JEV this mosquito season?

The forecast is a dry and hot summer. This generally means lower mosquito numbers inland, and therefore lower risk of flaviviruses such as JEV. However, there remains limited evidence on how JEV behaves in Australia during different environmental conditions.

NSW recommends people continue to avoid mosquito bites this summer: spray up (use repellent), cover up (wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants), screen up (cover windows and doors with insect screens) and clean up (remove any containers that hold water where mosquitoes may breed). Further information is available on the: [NSW Health mosquito-borne disease resources webpage](#).

Why has the vaccination criteria been updated now?

NSW Health continually reviews the evidence related to JEV risk in NSW in consultation with a range of health and environmental experts. Retrospective testing and modelling have demonstrated the 14 LGAs in this expansion may be capable of sustaining the main vector for flaviviruses (*Culex* species mosquito). Supply of the vaccine has also slightly improved in NSW, creating an opportunity to expand the vaccine to those at greatest risk.

How can I order vaccines?

Vaccine doses can be ordered through the State Vaccine Centre: <https://nsw.tollhealthcare.com/>. For larger orders that exceed current order restrictions, please contact the local public health unit (see below).

For pharmacists interested in ordering and administering vaccines, further information, including details of training requirements, is available on the [pharmacist vaccination webpage](#).

What are the cost considerations?

Japanese encephalitis vaccines provided through the State Vaccine Centre to pharmacists and GPs are free of charge. However, patients have been advised that some providers may charge an administration or consultation fee. To ensure equitable access to vaccination for those who meet the eligibility criteria, NSW Health asks that fees are reasonable, and in line with fees charged for administration of other similar vaccines.

For more information contact your local public health unit on 1300 066 055

Box 1. LGAs of high JEV risk:

- Albury
- Balranald
- Berrigan
- Bland
- Bogan
- Bourke
- Brewarrina
- Broken Hill
- **Cabonne**
- Carrathool
- **Cootamundra-Gundagai**
- Central Darling
- Cobar
- Coolamon
- Coonamble
- **Cowra**
- Dubbo Regional
- Edward River
- Federation
- Forbes
- Gilgandra
- Goulburn
- Mulwaree
- Greater Hume
- Griffith
- **Gunnedah**
- **Gwydir**
- Hay
- **Hilltops**
- **Inverell**
- Junee
- Lachlan
- Leeton
- **Liverpool Plains**
- Lockhart
- **Mid-Western**
- Moree Plains
- Murray River
- Murrumbidgee
- Narrabri
- Narrandera
- Narromine
- **Orange**
- Parkes
- **Tamworth**
- Temora
- **Tenterfield**
- Unincorporated Far West Area
- **Upper Hunter**
- **Upper Lachlan**
- Wagga Wagga
- Walgett
- Warren
- Warrumbungle
- Weddin
- Wentworth