
Subject: Jersey Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Statistics 2020-21
Date of report: 16 September 2021

Introduction

This publication reports the annual uptake of seasonal influenza (flu) vaccinations covering the winter period 2020-21. For statistics on incidence of influenza-like illness, please refer to the associated report “Jersey Seasonal Influenza-like Illness Statistics 2020-21” produced by the Public Health Directorate.

The Health and Community Services (HCS) Department co-ordinates a seasonal flu vaccine plan every year to prevent flu amongst those who are at a higher risk of flu-associated illness and mortality. This includes older people, pregnant women, and those with certain underlying medical conditions (known clinically as being ‘at-risk’). In addition, children are offered the flu vaccine to provide both individual protection to the children themselves and reduce transmission across all age groups to protect vulnerable members of the population.

Ahead of the 2020-21 winter season, HCS nurses offered the flu vaccine to schoolchildren, and GP practices and pharmacies offered the flu vaccine to people who fell into the higher risk categories (at a discounted rate or for free). To mitigate the potential impact on health services of a high level of circulating flu virus and the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, the 2020-21 season saw the extension of the flu vaccine programme to include 50 to 64-year olds.

The seasonal flu vaccine plan aims to protect and prevent as many people as possible within the following groups from catching flu during the winter season:

- infants 6 months to 2 years of age
- children aged 2, 3 and 4 years
- school-aged children reception up to year 11 (age 15 to 16)
- at-risk¹ 16 to 64-year olds
- people aged 50 to 64 years
- people aged 65 and over
- pregnant women
- households of those on the shielded patient list or of immunocompromised individuals

Public Health England suggested that flu vaccination coverage in 2020-21 season achieve a minimum 75% uptake across all eligible groups.

Although all countries of the UK use standardised specifications to extract uptake data from IT information systems in primary care, there are some differences in extraction specifications, so comparisons between Jersey and the four constituent countries of the United Kingdom should be made cautiously.

¹ *At-risk group – includes patients with a long-term medical condition including chronic respiratory disease or asthma; chronic heart disease; chronic kidney disease; chronic liver disease; chronic neurological disease; diabetes type 1 or type 2; a suppressed immune system; asplenia or spleen dysfunction or a BMI of more than 40*

What the data is telling us?

The 2020-21 season's immunisation programme was the most successful on record, with the highest levels of vaccine uptake recorded for those 65 years and over, under 65's with a clinical condition, two and three-year-olds and school-aged children.

The 2020-21 season saw the extension of the flu vaccine programme to include 50 to 64-year olds with almost half (45%) of this age group taking up the offer of the vaccine.

Influenza-like- illness activity was lower throughout the 2020-2021 flu season than in preceding seasons and contributed to fewer GP visits for flu illnesses and hospitalisations compared with previous flu seasons.

The Influenza vaccination is likely to have contributed to reduced flu illness during the 2020–2021 season, alongside the mitigation measures introduced as part of the response to the coronavirus pandemic. The Government of Jersey works each year to increase the number of people who receive a flu vaccine and eliminate barriers to vaccination.

Summary

- the proportion of pre-school children aged 2-4 years who were vaccinated in Nurseries or at GP surgeries in 2020-21 (69%) was higher than in the previous year 2019-20 (64%)
- vaccine uptake in the compulsory school-aged children programme (4-16 years) was 71%, higher when compared to the previous year's programme (59%)
- 550 pregnant women were immunised in 2020-21, a higher number than the previous year
- two in five patients aged 16-64 years in the at-risk group (44%) were vaccinated, a higher proportion when compared to 2019-20 (26%)
- around two in five individuals aged 50-64 years (45%) were vaccinated
- the proportion of patients aged 65 years and over who were vaccinated by a GP or Pharmacist (78%) was higher than in the previous year (55%)

Flu vaccine for pre-school children aged 2-4 years²

The vaccine plan for 2020-21 was the fourth year of the nursery-based immunisation programme, where GPs and Practice Nurses went into nurseries to offer the nasal flu vaccine. The vaccine was also available to children of this age-group through GP surgeries.

- a similar number of pre-school aged children were immunised in 2020-21 (1,400) as 2019-20 (1,380)
- influenza vaccine uptake in children aged 2 to 4 years (from October 2020 to March 2021) was 69%, higher than the uptake in the 2019-20 season (64%)

² Pre-school children (2, 3 and 4 year olds) whose date of birth was between 01/09/2016 and 15/10/2018

Table 1: Percentage of pre-school 2-4-year olds vaccinated in Nursery Programme or in GP surgery against influenza; 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21 winter periods

	2016-17 winter %	2017-18 winter %	2018-19 winter %	2019-20 winter %	2020-21 winter %
% of children aged 2-4 years vaccinated in nursery	0	41	39	47	55
% of children aged 2-4 years vaccinated in GP surgery	34	16	18	17	12
% of children aged 2-4 years vaccinated in other healthcare setting					3
<i>Total % uptake for children aged 2-4 years</i>	34	58	58	64	69

Flu vaccine for compulsory school-aged children (Reception to Year 11)

The children's nasal flu vaccination programme was introduced in 2014-15 with children in Reception classes (aged 4 to 5 years) being offered the vaccine via a school-based programme. The programme had been extended each year, and since 2018-19 the nasal flu vaccine has been offered to all compulsory school-aged children (Reception to Year 11 inclusive). A breakdown of the children immunised at school against flu, by year group, is given in Table 2.

- around 8,980 compulsory school-aged children had the flu vaccine in the 2020-21 winter:
 - 8,610 influenza vaccines were given in primary and secondary schools
 - 80 were given at GP surgeries
 - 260 were given at other healthcare settings
 - 20 were given to children who were home-schooled
- the number of vaccines given to school-aged children in 2020-21 was higher than the previous year (7,340)
- a higher proportion of those children who were eligible were vaccinated (73%) when compared to the previous year's programme (59%)

Table 2: Percentage of school-aged children receiving flu vaccination in school by year group³

	2015-16 winter %	2016-17 winter %	2017-18 winter %	2018-19 winter %	2019-20 winter %	2020-21 winter %
Reception	61	59	62	66	66	78
Year 1	58	57	60	63	66	73
Year 2	53	62	59	60	64	77
Year 3	-	54	60	61	62	71
Year 4	-	-	56	62	62	71
Year 5	-	-	56	57	61	70
Year 6	-	-	55	57	57	72
Year 7	-	-	-	55	54	63
Year 8	-	-	-	51	53	62
Year 9	-	-	-	48	50	58
Year 10	-	-	-	52	49	63
Year 11	-	-	-	57	49	56

Flu vaccine at GP surgeries and pharmacies

An annual flu vaccination is recommended by England's Chief Medical Officer for everyone aged from 6 months to 64 years of age with an underlying medical condition, for everyone aged 65 and older, and for pregnant women.

- around 550 influenza vaccines were given to pregnant women from 1 September 2020 to 31 March 2021 (see Table 3)

Table 3: Number of patients in the pregnant women category who were immunised at GP surgeries and pharmacies against influenza; 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21 winter periods

	2016-17 winter	2017-18 winter	2018-19 winter	2019-20 winter	2020-21 winter
Pregnant women	410	550	500	510	550

Table 4 provides the proportion of specific groups of patients who were actively registered⁴ at GP practices and who received an influenza vaccination in each of the last three years, either through their GP surgery or through pharmacies.

In the 2020-21 season, the programme was extended to include all 50 to 64-year olds not at risk (dependent on supply).

³ Table does not include the 80 children immunised at GP practices, or home-schooled children

⁴ Actively registered population are those who are registered with a Jersey GP surgery and have had a consultation with their GP within the last 4 years, or have changed active registration status within the last 6 months

In 2020-21:

- uptake of the flu vaccine at GP surgeries and pharmacies in the at-risk working age group (16-64 years) was 44%; a higher proportion to that in 2019-20 (26%)
- In the 2020-21 season, the programme was extended to include all 50 to 64-year olds not at risk; Uptake in Jersey for **all** 50 to 64-year olds was 45%
- around four in five (78%) of patients aged 65 and over received a seasonal flu vaccination with a GP or Pharmacist; Both Public Health England (PHE) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) uptake recommendation was that vaccine uptake for people aged 65 years and over should reach or exceed 75%⁵
- England saw a vaccine uptake of 81% in those aged 65 and over, in Wales 77%, and in Scotland the 2020-21 season indicates that for those aged 65 years and over the uptake was 80%

Table 4: Percentage of actively registered patients in the at-risk working age (16-64 years) group, and adults aged 65 and over who were immunised at GP surgeries and pharmacies against flu; 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21 winter periods

	2016-17 winter %	2017-18 winter %	2018-19 winter %	2019-20 winter %	2020-21 winter %
<i>At-risk working age (16-64 years) *</i>	24	35	33	25	44
<i>Adults aged 50-64 years</i>					45
<i>Adults aged 65 and over</i>	55	63	60	55	78

**Figures presented are a slight underestimate, since records at GP practices may not have been updated for individuals who received a seasonal flu vaccination provided at their place of work.*

⁵ World health Organisation Europe - [WHO/Europe | Influenza vaccination coverage and effectiveness](#)

Notes

Data Sources

- The data for this report are derived from GP Central Server (EMIS web); Community Pharmacy server (PharmOutcomes); information supplied by the Preventive Programmes Team about seasonal flu vaccinations given in nurseries and schools

Methodology

Percentage uptake in each of the priority groups were calculated using denominators (total in group) from the following sources:

- Percentage uptake in pre-school aged children, and compulsory school aged children: Data from Child Health Information System (CarePlus)
- Percentage uptake in actively registered patients in the at-risk working age (16-64 years) group: Data from actively registered list from GP Central Server (EMIS web)
- Percentage uptake in adults aged 65 and over: Data from actively registered list from GP Central Server (EMIS web)

Data quality and completeness

The data quality and completeness of data extracted from the GP central server cannot be assured, however where variation between GP practices is identified, this is fed back to individual surgeries for further checks. Figures pulled are also compared to previous year figures to see where large changes have occurred, these can then be further investigated.

There are limitations to the data reported for vaccinations of pregnant women in this report. Data completeness is reliant on the recording of delivery status in the mother's medical records and does not necessarily represent 100 per cent of the population of pregnant women.