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| Nurse Immuniser approval to administer the Japanese encephalitis vaccine in Victoria – Communique |
| May 2022 |
| OFFICIAL |

# Background

In March 2022, the Commonwealth declared the Japanese encephalitis (JE) virus a Communicable Disease Incident of National Significance. A vaccination management plan was announced that included the purchase of JE vaccines and provision of them free of charge to at-risk individuals recommended for vaccination.

A comprehensive whole of government response to the JE virus is also underway in Victoria. As part of this work, consideration has been given to the workforces that are authorised to administer the JE vaccine and the workforces that may be needed if Victoria is required to quickly scale up, escalate and adapt to changing circumstances in the future.

# Authorisations

To increase access and ease pressure on regional GPs in JE virus-affected areas, nurse immunisers have been authorised to administer the JE vaccine only to people who are recommended for vaccination as listed on the Victorian Department of Health’s (the department’s) Japanese encephalitis in Victoria website: <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/infectious-diseases/information-for-health-professionals-japanese-encephalitis-in-victoria>.

This list may be updated from time to time in response to changing circumstances, so nurse immunisers are required to check this list to confirm an individual’s eligibility prior to administering the vaccine.

The amended Secretary Approval: Nurse Immunisers was gazetted on 19 May 2022 and came into force on the date of gazettal. It is available from: <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation/nurse-immunisers-requirements-and-responsibilities>

The Nurse Immunisers Approved Client Groups has also been updated and can been accessed from: <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation/nurse-immunisers-approved-client-groups>

Pharmacist immunisers have also been authorised to administer the JE vaccine to people aged five years and older who are recommended for vaccination. This aligns with the minimum age group that is within pharmacist immunisers’ current scope of practice.

# Training requirements

Nurse and pharmacist immunisers who are administering the JE vaccine to eligible individuals in Victoria must first complete the Japanese encephalitis eLearning module that has been approved by the Deputy Chief Health Officer – Communicable Disease. The module is currently being finalised and is expected to be made available at the end of May 2022. Nurse immunisers will be able to access the module free from: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/immunisers-in-victoria/pharmacist-immunisers/pharmacist-immuniser-study-programs>.

An information sheet has been developed for JE vaccine providers and is available at: <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-04/Japanese-Encephalitis-Serology-Vaccine-Information-for-Immunisation-Providers-V3-4-pdf.pdf>

# More information

### Australian Immunisation Handbook

The [Australian Immunisation Handbook](https://betahealth.govcms.gov.au/news-and-events/news/the-digital-australian-immunisation-handbook)[[1]](#footnote-2) is available on the Commonwealth’s Department of Health website and provides a single, up-to-date clinical reference guide for health care providers administering vaccines in Australia.

### Victorian Government Department of Health

If you have any queries about this matter please email the Immunisation Unit [Immunisation@health.vic.gov.au](mailto:Immunisation@health.vic.gov.au)

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1. Available at: <https://immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au/vaccination-procedures/preparing-for-vaccination> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)