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Inappropriate influenza vaccinations

The Hunter General Practitioners Association (HGPA) is increasingly concerned that many of our patients aged over 65 years have not received the best type of influenza vaccine this year. This increases their risk of developing influenza and serious secondary consequences in the coming 'flu season.

People over 65 do not mount as strong an immune response as younger people to the standard influenza vaccines. As per Australian Government Department of Health guidelines,¹ over 65's should be given a boosted vaccine (*Fluad Quad*), which the government has provided to general practices and not to pharmacies or other vaccinators.

Fluad Quad is widely available in most (if not all) general practices. For now, influenza numbers are low, so there is time for those over 65 to be vaccinated in general practices with *Fluad Quad*.

The Hunter General Practitioners Association is urging pharmacies and workplace and commercial vaccination providers who do not have access to this vaccine to ensure that this group of higher risk people are advised to go to their general practitioners for *Fluad Quad*.

Anyone in the over 65 age group, who has been given one of the standard vaccines should not panic. It will still help protect them against influenza, although not to the same degree as *Fluad Quad*.

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¹ <https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/03/atagi-advice-on-seasonal-influenza-vaccines-in-2020.pdf>