

Public Health Clinical Alert

20 April 2026

Expanded eligibility for ACT government-funded JEV vaccine

Key information

- Japanese encephalitis is a rare but potentially serious illness caused by the Japanese encephalitis virus (JEV) and spread through the bite of an infected mosquito.
- From Thursday 23 April, eligibility for ACT Government-funded JEV vaccination will be **expanded** until 30 June 2026 to include anyone in the ACT who plans to travel to any high-risk areas in Australia for outdoor recreational activities.
- **There are Japanese encephalitis (JE) high risk areas in New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory.** Links to the relevant state/territory websites are available on the [ACT JEV vaccination webpage](#).
- JEV is now considered endemic to Australia. In NSW, JEV is endemic in the north-east and in areas west of the Great Dividing Range. The [Yass Valley Local Government Area](#), which borders the ACT, has recently been added to the NSW list of high-risk areas.
- The risk of JEV exposure has not changed in the ACT. To date, JEV has not been detected in mosquitoes or acquired in humans in the ACT.
- Continue to encourage mosquito bite prevention behaviours for people travelling to areas with mosquitoes, including people who have received a JEV vaccine.

Background

- Areas of south-east Australia have experienced a prolonged mosquito season this year. In northern Australia, mosquitoes can be active all year round.
- Of the seven people who acquired JE in NSW across the last two mosquito seasons (2024-2026), six are believed to have been bitten by mosquitoes while camping or caravanning. Outdoor recreational activities are a strong indicator of risk in affected areas.
- The [NSW](#) and [Victorian](#) Governments have recently announced similar time-limited expansions to the groups eligible for state government-funded JEV vaccines.
- This is a time-limited expansion of groups eligible for government-funded JEV vaccine. The eligibility criteria may be reviewed based on available stock and risk assessment.
- **Outdoor recreational activities** include but are not limited to caravanning, camping, hunting, boating, hiking and fishing.

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Vaccination

- Have a low threshold for recommending vaccination for [eligible people](#).
- Two vaccines are available: Imojev (live) and JEspect (inactivated). JEspect is reserved for people who cannot receive Imojev. Refer to the [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#) for more information including contraindications, precautions, and adverse events.
- Imojev is a single-dose primary course; JEspect is a two-dose primary course. Booster doses are recommended 1-2 years after primary vaccination for certain groups, if there is an ongoing risk of JEV exposure.
- People without a Medicare card may receive an ACT government-funded JEV vaccine.
- Privately-funded JEV vaccines are available for individuals who do not meet the current ACT government eligibility criteria e.g. for people travelling overseas.
- [Vaccinating pharmacists](#) may administer JEV vaccine to people 5 years and older, once they have completed the [online learning module](#).

Protective behaviours

- As there are mosquito-borne viruses other than JEV, encourage people to protect themselves against mosquito bites. Further information on bite prevention is available on the ACT Government [website](#).

Accessing ACT Government-funded JEV vaccines

- If you are an ACT immunisation provider, you can order JEV vaccine via the [Vaccine Order Form](#). Vaccines will be delivered on your next scheduled delivery date.
- It is mandatory to report JEV vaccines to the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).
- It is no longer a requirement to report JEV vaccination administration data to the ACT Government Immunisation Section.

Resources

- ACT Government [JEV vaccination webpage](#) (includes full eligibility information)
- ACT Government [Mosquitoes webpage](#)
- [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#)

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