

Vaccine Coverage Dutch National Influenza Prevention Program 2020: brief monitor

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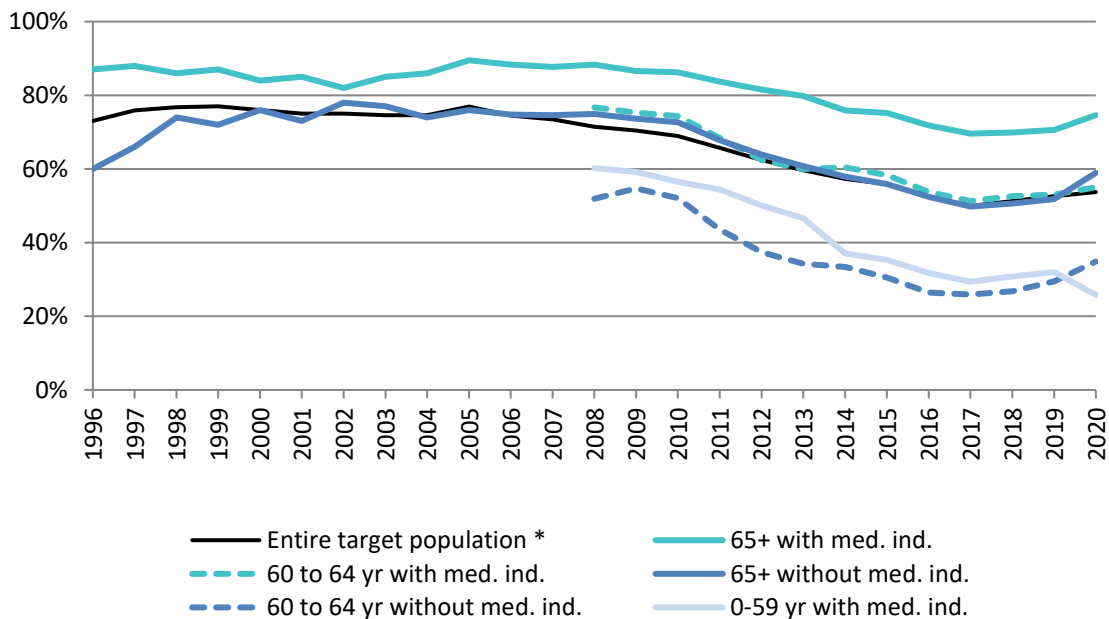
Increase in vaccine coverage in 2020

During the yearly influenza vaccination campaign of 2020, more people were vaccinated compared to 2019. The vaccine coverage in the general population increased from 18.3% in 2019 to 20.8% in 2020. A possible explanation for the increase in vaccine coverage could be that the importance of vaccination against influenza was emphasized during the COVID-19 pandemic. Among persons with an increased risk for complications due to influenza, because of age or a medical condition, 53.7% was vaccinated by their general practitioner.

Prior to the vaccination campaign, the Dutch college of General Practitioners revised the definition for the selection of the target population. When the old definition was applied, the vaccine coverage in the target population would have increased from 52.6% in 2019 to 57.3% in 2020. The vaccine coverage was relatively low among persons under 60 years of age who were invited for vaccination for the first time, probably because of revised definition.

The highest vaccine coverage (74.6%) was observed in persons over 65 years of age who also had a medical indication for vaccination. Vaccine coverage was relatively low in persons under 60 with a medical indication for vaccination (25.8%).

Figure 1 Vaccine coverage by age group and medical indication, 1996-2020



* In 2008, the age group 60 – 64 years was included among the target groups for influenza vaccination. Therefore, the vaccination coverage of the entire target population from 2008 onwards cannot be compared to previous years.

Table 1 Population size and influenza vaccine coverage by age group and medical indication, 2020

Age group	Size (% of population)	Vaccine coverage (% of population)
0-59 years with medical indication*	9.8	25.8
60 years and older	27.7	61.4
<i>Without medical indication</i>	13.3	51.0
<i>With medical indication</i>	14.4	71.0
60 to 64 years	7.1	42.6
<i>Without medical indication</i>	4.4	34.9
<i>With medical indication</i>	2.7	55.0
65 years and older	20.6	67.9
<i>Without medical indication</i>	8.9	58.9
<i>With medical indication</i>	11.7	74.6
Total target population	38.8	53.7

* Persons under age 60 only belong to the target population if they have a medical indication.

Table 2 Population size and influenza vaccine coverage by specific medical indication for vaccination, 2020

Medical indication	Size (% of target population)	Vaccine coverage (% of group)
Cardiovascular diseases	7.9	67.2
Pulmonary diseases	11.8	47.6
Diabetes mellitus	6.4	66.4
Weakened immune system	7.8	42.2
Chronic renal failure	2.1	66.3
Respiratory disorders caused by neurological conditions	0.5	54.3
HIV	0.1	45.4

Monitoring the Dutch National Influenza Prevention Program

An influenza infection is relatively harmless for most persons, however, in those who are vulnerable because of high age or medical conditions, influenza may cause serious complications. The World Health Organization (WHO) therefore advises that vulnerable groups should be vaccinated. Vaccination reduces both the risk of getting an influenza infection and the risk of complications if someone is infected. The Dutch National Influenza Prevention Program was established in 1997 and coordinates and implements the influenza vaccination program. Persons at risk for complications due to (the consequences of) influenza are invited to visit their general practitioner for influenza vaccination free of charge. The target group is defined as all people aged 60 years or older and people with certain (chronic) diseases. The annual monitoring of vaccination uptake rates allows one to evaluate the number of people that are vaccinated (vaccine coverage) each year. In 2009, the European Union set a target to reach a vaccine coverage of 75% in the elderly and, if possible, in those with a medical indication.

About the monitor

The 2020 monitor was performed by Nivel and commissioned by RIVM. Data from general practices participating in Nivel Primary Care Database were used for the analysis. For more information (in Dutch), see:

[Monitor Vaccinatiegraad Nationaal Programma Grieppreventie 2020. Utrecht: Nivel, 2021](#)

Citing this publication

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