

# Influenza Vaccination:

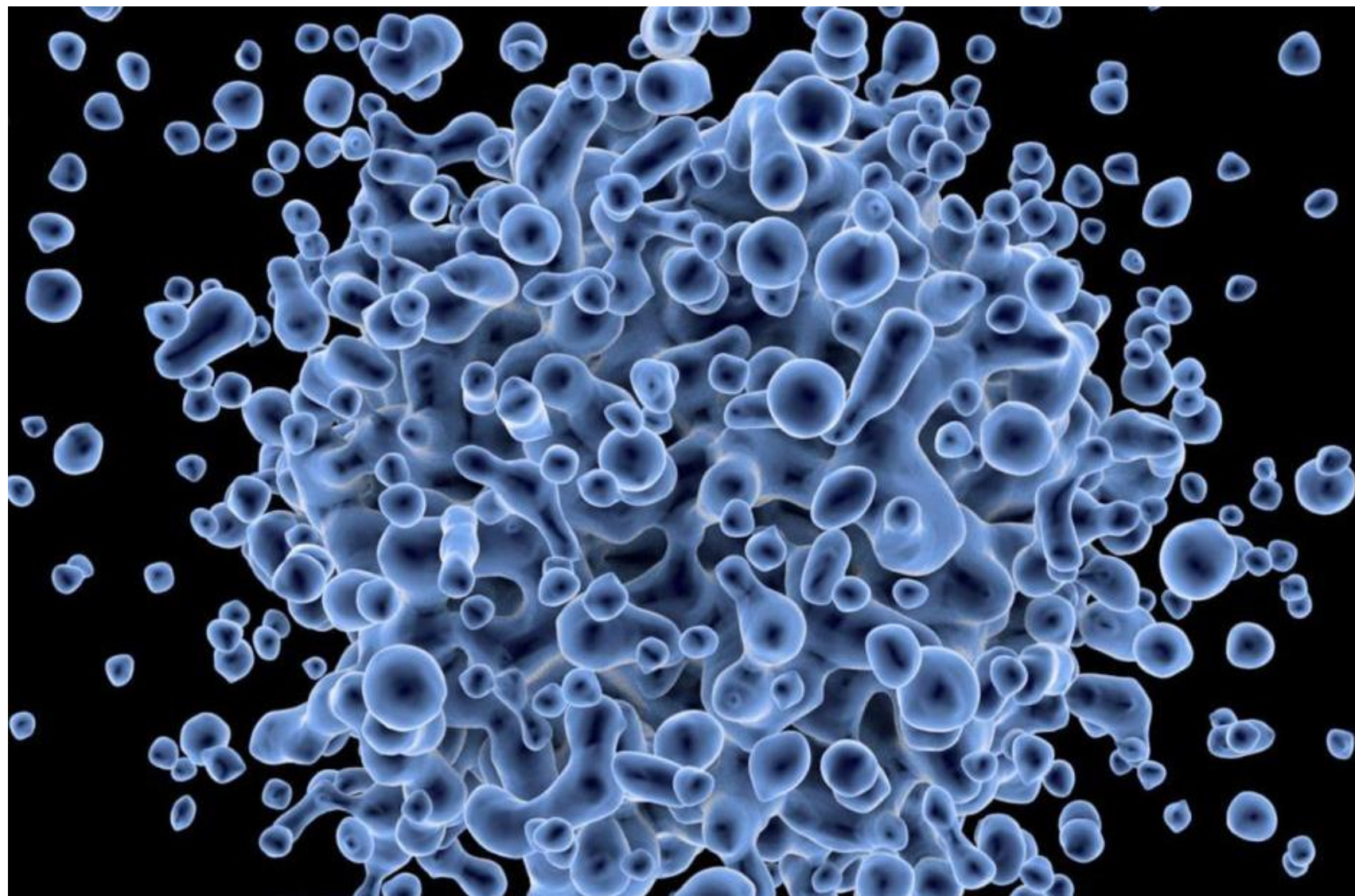
## Unpredictability - challenges in Primary Care

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Is flu vaccination  
broken?



## Biggest Challenge

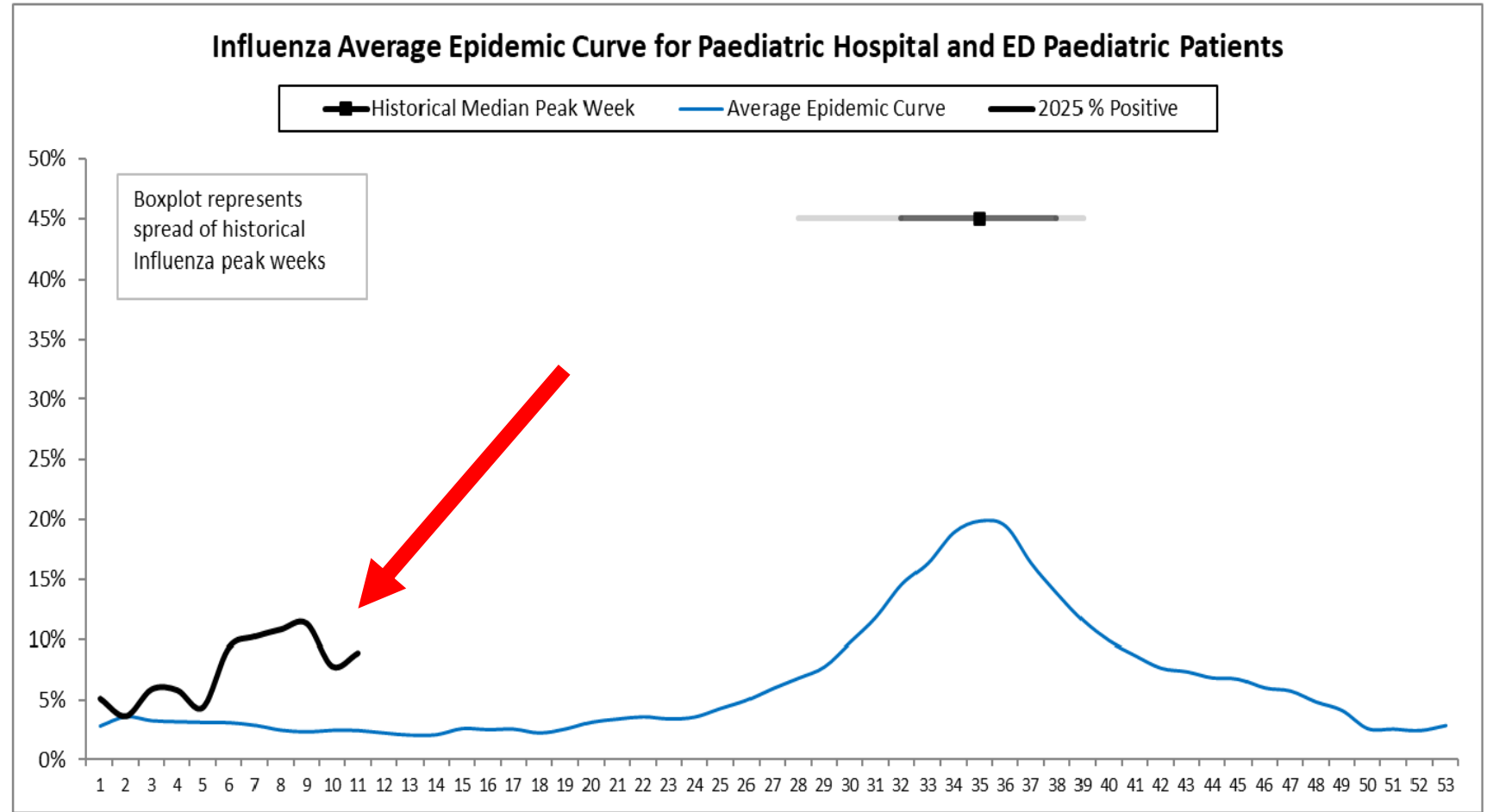
“The most predictable aspect of influenza  
is that it is unpredictable!”

# Viral Variability

- Antigenic drift and shift
- New strains each year
- Surveillance-led predictions
  - Southern and Northern Hemispheres
- Season variability
  - Early late
- Other influences
  - Covid
  - Viral illnesses
- 2025 season – already above baseline



2025 Season –  
already above  
baseline



**Figure 2:** The current season plotted against the Paediatric Influenza Average Epidemic Curve. The average epidemic curve was constructed by averaging historic WA seasons using PathWest data from 2007-2019. Data represents all WA hospitalised, and ED paediatric patients tested by PathWest.

# Vaccine Effectiveness

- Long lead time vaccine production
- Potential mismatch with circulating strains
  - Manufacture issues
  - 2 hemispheres
- Year-to-year variation in effectiveness
  - In season variation
- Seasonal vaccination
- **Good, not a great vaccine!**



# Clinical Impact

- Varies widely each season
- High risk populations hit hardest
- Strain specific morbidity and mortality



# Public and Patient Behaviour

- The 3 C's
  - Cost
  - Complacency
  - COVID
- Vaccine fatigue and misinformation
- Uptake varies with perceived severity
- Influence of media and public discourse



## Challenges in General Practice

- Fragmentation of care
  - Now a shared responsibility
  - Reminder systems
- The right vaccine for the right patient
- Ordering and stock issues
  - Storage
- Staffing for clinics
- Communicating risk and benefit clearly

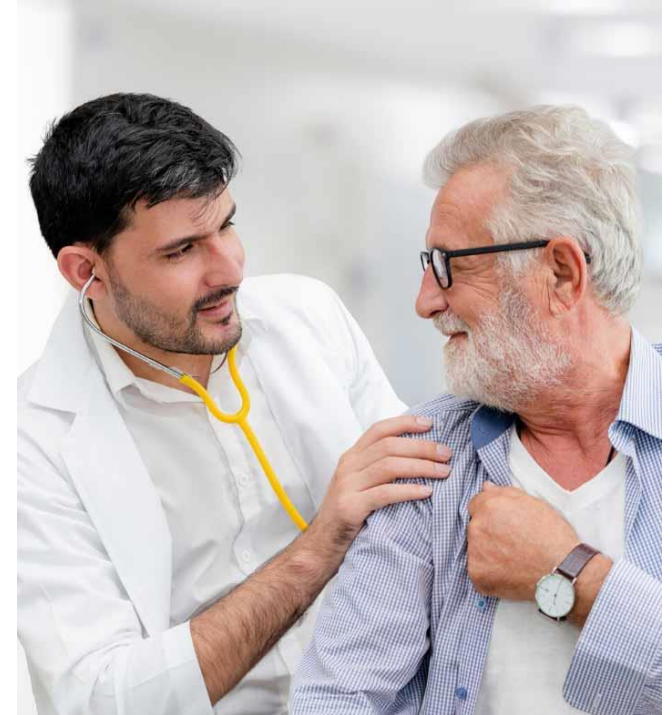
“The right vaccine for the right patient”

## Influenza vaccines available in Western Australia

2025 Government funded influenza vaccines (WA)					
Cohort	Program / Brand	Vaxigrip Tetra	Flucelvax Quad	FluQuadri	Fluad Quad
All children 6 months to <5 years	NIP	✓		✓	
All primary school children 5 to 11 years	State			✓	
Medically at risk persons 5 to <65 years	NIP	✓	✓		
Free Influenza Program May and June 2025 - 12 to <65 years	State			✓	
Persons experiencing homelessness or congregated living - 12 to <65 years	State			✓	
All adults ≥65 years	NIP				✓
Refer to the WA Immunisation Schedule (at risk persons includes ATSI, pregnant women, MRC) All government funded vaccines have no latex present, and do not include needles.					
WA Health Staff only (HCW)	State		✓	✓	✓

# The GP's Role

- Stay agile and informed
- Communicate with confidence
- Be proactive, not reactive
- Tips
  - Opportunistic immunisation
  - Check AIR – source of truth
  - Offer with routine imms
- Education of immunisation providers
- Provider hesitancy



# Final Thoughts

- Flu may be unpredictable, but our response doesn't have to be
- As GPs, we influence community uptake and resilience
- Let's keep doing what we do best: adapting, educating, and protecting
- Strong communication is key: clarity amidst the chaos



“final words”

**“No two flu seasons are ever the same – that’s why annual vaccination matters.”**

THANKYOU

