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Function: Head of Vaccines, Immunization and Biological Products Unit

Main expertise:

Specialist in national immunization programmes, with experience in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating vaccination strategies.

Leadership in public health initiatives, having coordinated the DGS Task Force during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Regular collaboration with national and international bodies, including ECDC, WHO and OECD.



Adult Immunization Board
– Country meeting

Adult immunization in
Portugal: successes,
lessons learned and the
way forward

Session 4: Implementation and delivery of adult vaccination services in Portugal

From DGS Perspective

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Adult Vaccination | A Life-Course Strategy

1. **Life-course** vaccination approach
2. Continuous **scientific evaluation**: translation of evidence into clinical guidance
3. Alignment with EU and international recommendations, **adapted to the Portuguese epidemiological and healthcare context.**

Blue Book of Vaccines

- [Blue Book of Vaccines](#): National immunization programme and other immunization strategies
- Collaborative technical reference that aims to provide information on vaccines and immunoglobulins, keeping pace with their rapid scientific and technological development, as well as with changes in disease epidemiology
- Continuously updated document that enables real-time adjustments to vaccination and immunisation recommendations
- It supports evidence-based vaccination strategies and the dissemination of reliable, accessible information, reinforcing Portugal's commitment to modern, adaptable vaccination policies



Parte 1: Programa Nacional de Vacinação

Vacinação de adultos¹

Ao longo da vida, a proteção adquirida através da vacinação efetuada durante a infância, pode diminuir para algumas doenças (conhecido como *waning vacinal*), o que pode justificar a recomendação de administração de doses adicionais de reforço, que garantam a manutenção da proteção. Por outro lado, o envelhecimento é acompanhado por um decréscimo natural da imunidade, processo conhecido por imunossenescência, tornando os indivíduos idosos mais vulneráveis a infeções.²

Durante a gravidez, alterações no sistema imunitário podem tornar a grávida mais suscetível a infeções e, a vacinação da grávida, para além de contribuir para a sua proteção individual, contribui também para a proteção do recém-nascido nos seus primeiros meses de vida.

Algumas doenças crónicas ou medicamentos podem levar a um estado de imunossupressão, podendo justificar a vacinação de grupos de risco específicos em idade adulta.

A vacinação de adultos pode ser importante, também, no contexto de viagens internacionais para países endémicos para determinadas doenças e para a manutenção da imunidade de grupo, protegendo os indivíduos suscetíveis da população.³

Tal como as estratégias para grupos com circunstâncias especiais, a maioria das estratégias vacinais disponíveis para adultos têm em consideração critérios de risco acrescido (idade mais avançada, comorbilidades ou contextos de risco) que se traduzem numa relação de risco-benefício adequada para a implementação de uma estratégia populacional custo-efetiva.

Durante toda a vida, recomendam-se as vacinas elencadas no Quadro nº 1.

Adult Vaccination | A Life-Course Strategy

Adult vaccination in National Vaccination Program

- Healthy adults and ageing population: chronic diseases and immunosuppression; pregnancy, occupational risk and travel.
- Consider **increased risk criteria** (older age, comorbidities or risk contexts).
- Appropriate risk-benefit relationship for **implementing a cost-effective population strategy**.

Quadro n.º 1 – Vacinas recomendadas a adultos (≥18 anos de idade)

Vacina/ Infecção-Doença	25 anos	45 anos	65 anos	10/10 anos	Grupos de risco	Anualmente
Tdpa tétano, difteria e tosse convulsa	Tdpa - Grávidas					
Td Tétano e difteria	Td	Td	Td	Td		
Gripe						Gripe (ver capítulo específico)
VGZ Gripe zoonótica					VGZ (ver capítulo específico)	
COVID -19						COVID-19 (ver capítulo específico)
Pn20 e Pn23 <i>Streptococcus pneumoniae</i>			Pn23 (ver capítulo específico)		Pn20+Pn23 (ver capítulo específico)	
MVA-BN mpox					MVA-BN (ver capítulo específico)	
VHA hepatite A					VHA (ver capítulo específico)	
VHB hepatite B					VHB (ver capítulo específico)	
VIP poliomielite					VIP (ver capítulo específico)	
VASPR sarampo, parotidite epidémica e rubéola					VASPR (ver capítulo específico)	

Adult Vaccination | Systems Supporting

1. Information systems

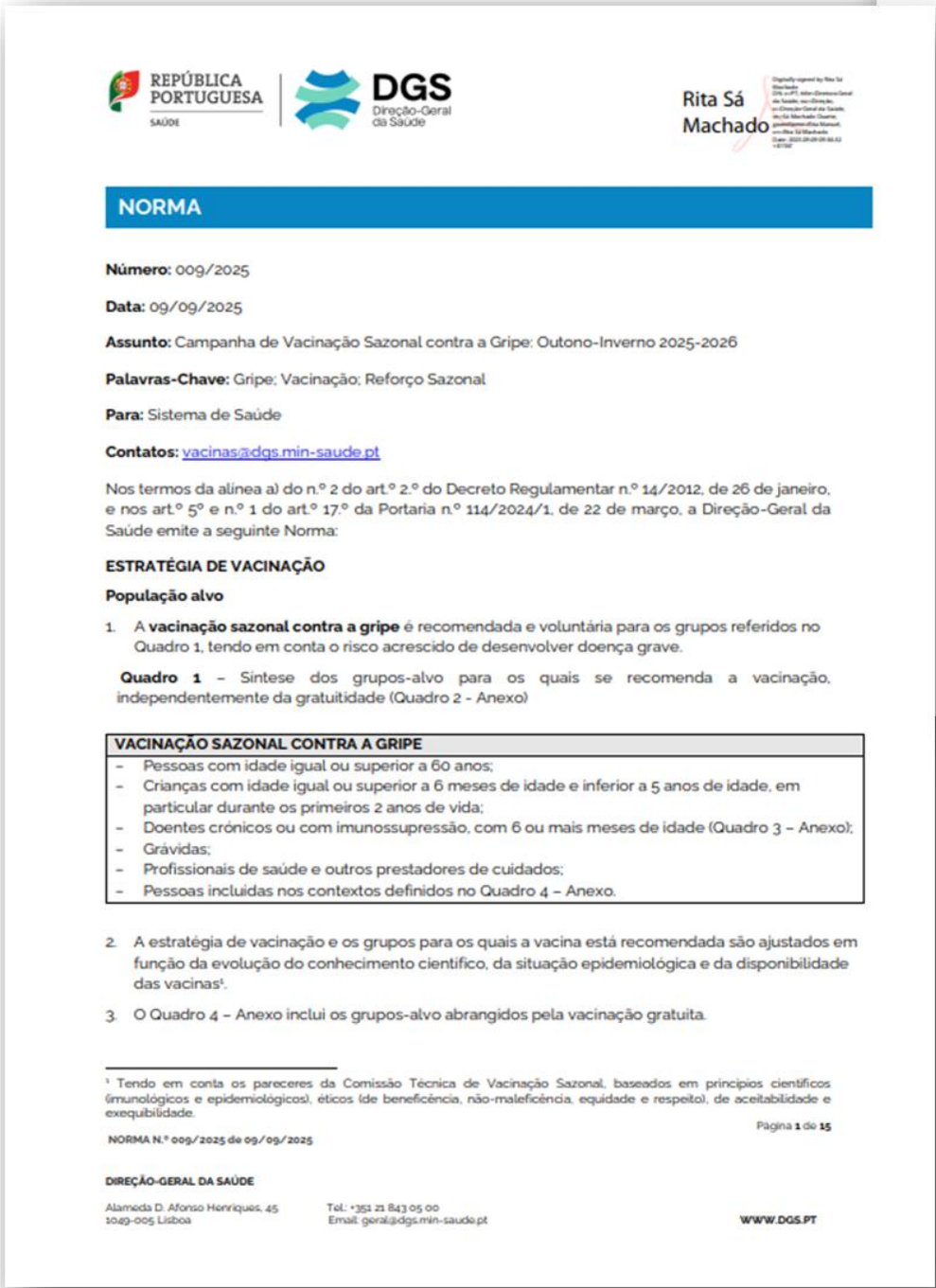
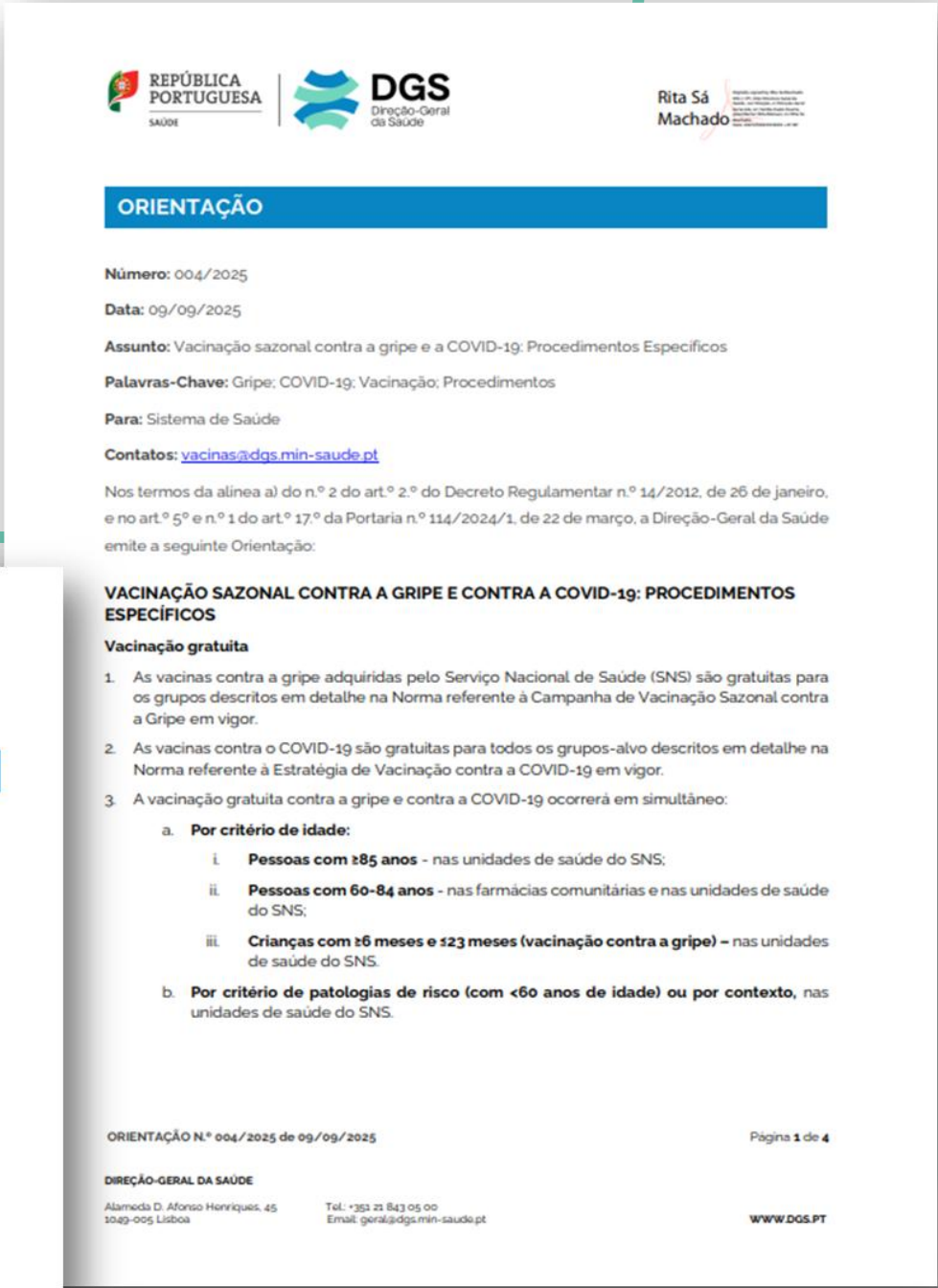
- a. Electronic Vaccination Registry | **VACINAS®**
- b. Dashboards | Monitoring Vaccination Data



Adult Vaccination | Systems Supporting

2. Legal and Technical-Normative documents

- a. Clinical guidelines and Blue Book of Vaccines
- b. Integrated care pathways



Adult Vaccination | Systems Supporting

3. Health Communication

- a. National Communication Campaigns | Seasonal Vaccination Campaign
- b. Television programs and Social Networks
- c. Reliance on community partners and public figures
- d. Sending reminder SMS | Call for eligible candidates



Adult Vaccination | Stakeholders and Delivery Channels

Governance and Stakeholders:

Ministry of Health

DGS | National Coordinator

Partners |

| Portuguese National Health Service Executive Board

| Shared Services Of The Ministry Of Health

| National Authority of Medicines and Health Products

| SUCH

| Central Administration of the Health System

| INSA

| Regional Vaccination Delegations

| Local Health Units

| Vaccination points

Vaccination points:

1. Primary healthcare Units
2. Hospitals
3. Pharmacies
4. Occupational health services
5. Other contexts: at-home vaccination:
elderly and long-term care
institutions; prisons; local points
defined for Homeless People

Adult Vaccination | Training and Professional Engagement

- 1. Healthcare professionals are central to adult vaccination**
2. Strong clinical recommendations significantly influence acceptance
3. Continuous professional education
4. Communication and recommendation skills | Motivational interviewing and vaccine confidence
5. Interdisciplinary collaboration
6. Harmonization of clinical practices

Adult Vaccination | Current Challenges

1. Low Coverage Rates | Missed opportunities
2. Vaccine Hesitancy and Misinformation
3. Complex Guidelines
4. Healthcare System Barriers
5. Resource and Workforce Limitations
6. Adult recall and reminder limitations

Adult Vaccination | Improvements Needed

1. Enhance Public Awareness
2. Improve Access and Convenience
3. Strengthened recall systems
4. Enhanced digital decision-support
5. Monitor and Evaluate

Adult Vaccination | Evaluation of Strategies

Vaccination strategies in Portugal are continuously evaluated based on evolving scientific evidence, epidemiological trends and real-world performance data.

1. Coverage Monitoring
2. Program Effectiveness | Evaluate campaign outcomes; Measure impact on disease incidence
3. Professional Engagement Metrics
4. Patient Feedback and Satisfaction | Accessibility, convenience, and communication
5. System and Process Evaluation
6. Continuous Improvement | Refine strategies, optimize resources, and improve outreach.

Adult Vaccination | Future Challenges

1. Emerging Infectious Diseases
2. Vaccine hesitancy and misinformation
3. Aging Population and Comorbidities
4. Healthcare System Constraints
5. Policy and Guideline Updates
6. Technology and Digital Integration
- 7. Sustainability and equity**

Conclusion

1. Adult vaccination as strategic priority
2. Evidence-based continuous improvement
3. Commitment to collaboration



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Thank you!

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