



Influenza (flu) vaccine

Australia is heading into the Influenza (the flu) season. Ability Plus Disability Services strongly encourages participants to be immunised against the flu. If you require any assistance to arrange your flu vaccination please contact Ability Plus on 9555 1150.

Key points

- Australia is heading into the Influenza (the flu) season which is expected to overlap with the current COVID-19 pandemic.
- Influenza is a contagious respiratory virus associated with fever, chills, joint and muscle pain, headache, and fatigue.
- The flu is not COVID-19. There is currently no COVID-19 vaccination.
- [Resources](#) are available on the Australian Government Department of Health website that provide information to the community about getting vaccinated against influenza in 2020.
- Vaccination is the most effective way to reduce the spread of the flu and reduce the incidence and severity of flu-related hospitalisations and deaths.
- Young children, the elderly, people with chronic medical conditions, neurodevelopmental disorders or weakened immune systems are most at risk of serious complications of the flu.
- Flu vaccinations are critical to reduce the risk of serious health issues for many people with disability.
- Flu vaccinations should be administered during mid to late April 2020.

Background

What is influenza?

Influenza (the flu) is a common seasonal respiratory virus with transmission typically peaking during mid to late winter each year. Symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, aching muscles and joints, and sneezing or runny nose. While most people will recover naturally within one week, the flu can lead to other serious medical conditions such as pneumonia and even death in people who are most at risk. The influenza virus spreads by human-to-human contact or through droplets (sneezing, coughing or talking). People who are not feeling well should be encouraged to rest until they are better and consult a doctor if symptoms persist.

Is the flu vaccine effective?

Vaccination is the best protection against the flu. The flu vaccine needs updating yearly to reflect changes in the influenza virus. The flu vaccine prevents transmission in approximately 50-60% of people and reduces the risk of transmission to more vulnerable people, such as the very young who are unable to be immunised. You can also minimise the spread of the virus by following good hand hygiene and respiratory/cough etiquette.

Is the flu the same as COVID-19 (coronavirus)?

COVID-19 is not the flu, although both have some similar symptoms such as fever, coughing or sore throat. For COVID-19 symptoms visit the Australian Government Department of Health website. The flu vaccination will not reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. However, failure to vaccinate against the flu may increase the severity of a COVID-19 infection.

Whilst there is no vaccination for COVID-19, it is very important to be vaccinated against the flu, for which a vaccine is available.

More Information:

- For some more information regarding immunisation for work please visit the Better Health Victorian Government Website at <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/immunisations-at-work>
- You can also contact the National Immunisation Information Line on 1800 671 811.
- For further information regarding influenza please refer to the World Health Organisation - [https://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/influenza-\(seasonal\)](https://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/influenza-(seasonal))
- For further information on COVID-19, please refer to the [Australian Government Department of Health information](#).