

Congratulations on getting your flu shot!

Information for staff



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Everyone has a role to play when it comes to preventing the spread of flu and other diseases. You are now a role model for your friends, family and colleagues.

What is influenza?

Influenza (the flu) is caused by a virus. The flu is more than just a bad cold and can occasionally lead to serious complications, including death. Symptoms include high fever, sore throat, weakness, headache, muscle and joint pains and a cough.

How is influenza spread?

In general, influenza viruses are spread in two ways:

- respiratory droplets from an infected person's cough or sneezes (these droplets generally travel less than one metre); and
- touching contaminated surfaces (including hands) and then touching your mouth, nose or eyes.

Ways you can combat the spread of colds and flu this winter

Encourage colleagues to get the free flu vaccine

Check out our tips for doing this below.

- Wash your hands regularly

The simplest way to prevent the spread of flu and other infectious disease is to regularly wash your hands, particularly after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.

Cover your coughs or sneezes

If you do start coughing or sneezing, cover your nose and mouth with a tissue, throw the tissue in a plastic-lined rubbish bin and then wash your hands.

If you get sick, stay home

If you catch a cold or flu and are unwell, avoid spreading it to other people. This might mean:

- staying home from work
- avoiding public places like shopping centres and public transport
- keeping children home from school or child care if they are unwell.

Please seek medical advice if symptoms continue or get worse.



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'Why get the flu shot?' Tips for convincing your friends, family and colleagues

The following are common reasons why people say they don't get the flu vaccine. Arm yourself with the facts below so you can give an informed and convincing response!

'The flu is not that serious.'

It is estimated that 2,800 Australians die from flu every year and 18,000 are hospitalised, some because of serious complications.

If you come into contact with infants, pregnant women, older people or immune-compromised people while you have flu you are putting them at risk of serious complications.

Apart from that, it takes an average of two weeks to recover from flu. That's a long time for work and chores to pile up.

If you get the flu shot:

- you can avoid spreading it to at-risk people
- you can avoid feeling awful yourself
- you can avoid having to put your life on hold.

'You get flu from the flu shot.'

It is just not possible to get the flu from getting the flu shot. The vaccine does not contain any active virus.

The vaccine contains particles of killed viruses, so it cannot cause influenza. Some people can experience side effects to the vaccine, which include pain, redness and swelling at the injection site, low grade temperature, muscle aches and/or drowsiness.

It takes about two weeks for immunity to develop after getting the flu shot, so if you do get flu soon after

getting your shot, it's because your immunity was not yet fully developed.

'I got the flu shot last year. I don't need it again.'

Even if you had the flu shot last year, immunity wanes over 12 months. In addition, Influenza viruses change frequently so the flu vaccine is updated every year to cover common circulating strains.

'I don't have the time/money.'

It's free to staff who attend the advertised sessions and you can do it in work time, saving money for the vaccine plus the cost and time of a visit to the doctor.

The National Immunisation Program Schedule provides free influenza vaccine for people at greater risk of influenza complications. This includes:

- all people aged 65 years and older
- pregnant women
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 6 months to 4 years inclusive and 15 years and older
- everyone aged from six months and over with medical conditions that put them at risk of complications from influenza infection.

Further information on influenza and vaccination is available at: <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/influenza>

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