

It's your choice



Bee warned

Influenza has an annual global infection rate estimated at 5–10% in adults and 20–30% in children.² It is a widespread, highly contagious virus that can sometimes mean a stay in hospital and in some high-risk individuals can even prove fatal.¹



To be or not to be protected against flu this season?



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A real sting in the tail

Not many people know that real flu, or influenza as it is known, may become a severe illness. A real case of flu is a matter to be taken seriously. Symptoms of the flu can include fever, headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle aches, and stomach symptoms, such as nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea, particularly in children.

Flu can cause:

- 3-4 days illness, followed by weeks of fatigue and feeling under the weather
- the need to take time off work
- severe interference in everyday life
- medical complications for those suffering from asthma and other serious conditions

It is possible to infect those around you before your symptoms even show. This could be very serious in people at risk eg. young children or the elderly.

Bee aware

The best way to prevent the flu is to get a flu vaccination each year. Flu vaccination doesn't protect only you, it also protects against you spreading the flu to others.

Bee informed – flu FAQs

Q How effective is the flu vaccine?

A Flu vaccines are around 70-90% effective. They provide the best protection from the influenza virus and prevent its spread to other people.¹

Q Can I catch the flu from a flu vaccine?

A The flu vaccine does not contain the live virus, so there is no possibility of it giving you influenza.¹

Q Does the vaccine take effect straight away?

A No, the vaccine takes two weeks to become effective. That's why you need to take action early and consider vaccination before the flu season starts.¹

Q Will the flu vaccination stop me getting a cold?

A The immunisation is for the flu only; it will not prevent you from getting the common cold or other 'flu-like' illness. This is because the vaccine contains fragments of three common influenza virus strains; it does not protect you against any other infection.¹

Q Is there anyone who should NOT have the flu vaccination?

A People with an allergy to antibiotics (gentamycin or neomycin), eggs, or any component of the vaccine should not be immunised against the flu. This is because there is a risk of the vaccine causing the person to have a severe and dangerous reaction. People with a history of Guillain-Barre syndrome should not be vaccinated. The vaccine is generally not recommended for women in their first trimester of pregnancy. For more information about who should not have the flu vaccination, speak to your doctor or pharmacist.¹

Q Are there any side-effects?

A The flu vaccine is generally well-tolerated. Some people experience mild soreness or irritation around the injection site, headache, fever or slightly aching body, however these side-effects if they occur seldom last beyond 1-2 days.¹

Bee safe

Australians who are most in need of a flu vaccine are:

- children, the elderly and adults who suffer from chronic conditions such as heart disease, diabetes mellitus and renal failure,
- people with a weakened immune system,
- asthmatics,
- those who may spread the flu to other at risk people, such as teachers, health professionals or people with high contact with the public,
- those who wish to lessen their chances of contracting influenza.

Bee ready

Don't wait until the flu season starts. Think about getting vaccinated early. All it takes is a visit to your doctor or local vaccination provider. The vaccination may not be completely effective for every person, but in most cases it will offer protection from the virus for up to a year. By immunising yourself against the flu, you will also avoid infecting those close to you.



References:

1. Influenza (2nd edition). Rapid Reference. Editors: JC Wilschut, JE McElhaney and AM Palache. Elsevier, 2006
2. WHO, Weekly epidemiological record, 2005, 80; 277-288