

Why do I need to get vaccinated against the flu every year?

There are two main reasons for getting a yearly flu vaccine:

- Flu viruses are frequently changing and vaccines may be updated from one season to the next to protect against the most recent and common circulating strains.
- A person's immune protection from influenza vaccination declines over time and annual vaccination is recommended.

What are the possible side effects from the flu shot?

Common side effects following seasonal flu vaccination include soreness, fever, redness, pain and swelling at the injection site, vomiting and malaise. These side effects are usually mild and resolve within a few days, usually quickly without any treatment.

Generally, reactions may occur within a few hours following vaccination and may last 1 to 2 days. Allergic reactions are uncommon after vaccination, but can be severe in some people. These reactions are due to an allergy to egg protein or to other components of the vaccine, including the antibiotics neomycin and polymyxin, which are in the vaccine in small amounts. Some severe allergic reactions can happen within 15 minutes. That is why it is important to wait in the allocated area for 15 minutes after being vaccinated.

Is it safe for me to get the flu shot if I am pregnant?

Yes, the flu vaccine can be safely given during any stage of pregnancy. Pregnant women are at increased risk of severe disease or complications from the flu. Vaccinating against flu during pregnancy can not only protect pregnant women but provide ongoing protection to a newborn baby for the first six months after birth.

If in doubt, please speak to your doctor to confirm it's safe to continue.



Should I receive the vaccine if I am feeling unwell?

If you are suffering from an acute feverish illness (temperature equal to or above 38.5 °C) you should not receive the vaccine until you have fully recovered. If you are suffering from a mild illness and do not have a fever, there is no reason why you should not receive the vaccine. If you are feeling unwell at the time of your vaccination appointment, please discuss your symptoms with the nurse.

If I get a side effect after I have a flu vaccine, where can I report it?

You can report adverse events to us (AVS) on 02 8097 0753 and your doctor. Side effects or adverse events following any immunisation can also be reported to the Therapeutic Goods Administration by calling the Adverse Medicine Events Line on 1300 134 237 or lodging a report online at the TG website, via the 'report a problem link'. AVS is keen to assist with this process as it's important to record adverse reactions.

Further information

If you would like further information on the vaccine and the flu vaccination program, please click on the below links:

Dept. of Health Influenza Surveillance Report
Patient Information Flyer
Flu Vaccination Poster
Flu Vaccination Post Vaccination Brochure

