



Influenza

The Facts

Influenza, commonly known as the flu, is a highly contagious infection of the nose, throat and lungs caused by the influenza virus.

The COVID-19 Vaccines do not protect you against the flu.



HOW DO YOU TREAT THE FLU?

The recommended treatment is rest, drinking plenty of fluids and use of paracetamol for the relief of pain and fever. See your local doctor if you are concerned about the symptoms or if they are getting worse, otherwise stay home to aid quicker recovery and reduce spread to others. Antiviral medication may be prescribed if you are at risk of complications from the flu. Antiviral medication needs to be started within 48 hours from the onset of your flu symptoms. Antibiotics are not effective for treating the flu.

Your symptoms may include:

Headache, muscle aches, rapid onset of fever, fatigue, sneezing, running nose, sore throat, cough.

Influenza and COVID-19 share similar symptoms. RAT tests are now available that test for both COVID-19 and Influenza.



WHO SHOULD GET THE FLU VACCINATION?

An annual flu vaccination is recommended for any person from six months of age who wishes to reduce their chance of being ill with the flu. For anyone in a high-risk category, the flu can be a serious and potentially fatal illness. The National Health and Medical Research Council strongly recommend annual vaccination for people in high risk categories for whom the flu can be a serious and potentially fatal illness.

- Heart conditions
- Severe asthma
- Lung conditions
- Diabetes
- Kidney problems
- Adults over 65
- Impaired immunity
- Malignant cancers
- Pregnant women
- Chronic neurological disorders
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
- Healthcare workers

THREE THINGS YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW ABOUT THE FLU VACCINATION:



There is no live virus in the flu shot



The composition of the vaccine changes every year



The flu shot is safe for pregnant women at all stages of their pregnancy



WILL I CATCH THE "FLU" FROM THE VACCINE?

The vaccine is composed of inactivated or dead virus and so despite claims, it does not actually cause the "flu". However, it is understandable that people may be concerned about this risk as up to 10% of recipients may develop fever, fatigue and muscle aches. This is the immune system's response to a perceived threat and is normal. It is often worth reminding individuals that their symptoms will last only a few days whereas influenza can make you unwell for far longer.



WHO SHOULD DISCUSS THE FLU VACCINATION WITH THEIR GP FIRST?

- If you have a severe infection with a high fever ($\geq 38.5^{\circ}\text{C}$)
- If you have ever had Guillain-Barré Syndrome
- If you are taking any of the following medications:
 - Warfarin (Coumadin, Marevan)



WHAT CAN I DO AFTER THE VACCINE?

While around 10% of recipients may develop symptoms at the site of the injection – redness, pain, swelling, there is no activity that should be avoided.

If the person feels otherwise well 15 minutes after the vaccination they can continue their usual work and recreational activities.



HOW DO YOU PREVENT THE FLU?

Simple ways to control the spread of the flu is to get the annual flu vaccination and to practice good personal hygiene such as washing your hands, wiping over frequently touched surfaces with a paper towel covered in detergent and covering your mouth with your elbow, when coughing or sneezing.

Stay at home if unwell to aid recovery and reduce spread to others.



IS THE FLU VACCINATION SAFE FOR PREGNANT WOMEN?

Yes. The flu vaccination can be safely given during any stage of pregnancy. Pregnant women are at an increased risk of severe disease or complications from the flu.

Vaccinating against the 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 I'M PREGNANT, CAN SONIC HEALTHPLUS ADMINISTER MY FLU VACCINATION AT MY WORKPLACE?

The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation recommends the vaccination during any stage of pregnancy. We are happy to offer the vaccination to all pregnant women.



ARE THERE ANY SERIOUS REACTIONS POSSIBLE WHEN HAVING THE VACCINATION?

As with any vaccinations and medications, there is the possibility of an anaphylactic reaction. These are rare events and usually occur within 15 minutes of receiving the vaccination. For this reason, it is important for you to wait 15 minutes post-vaccination before leaving.

With worker safety paramount, Sonic HealthPlus recommends that the following people see their usual health professional to discuss their suitability for having the vaccine:

- Workers who have previously reacted to the vaccine
- Workers with a history of anaphylaxis or a severe reaction to eggs or egg products



ARE THERE ANY SIDE EFFECTS FROM THE FLU VACCINATION?

Like any medication, some people may experience an unexpected reaction to the flu vaccination. Common side effects include:

- Pain, redness and swelling at the injection site
- Low-grade temperature
- Headache or muscle aches
- Drowsiness or tiredness
- Generally feeling unwell
- A temporary small lump at the injection site.

Most side effects are minor, last a short time, resolve without any treatment and do not lead to any long-term problems. Generally, mild reactions begin within 6 to 12 hours.



WHO WILL ADMINISTER THE FLU VACCINATION?

At your workplace, the vaccination will be administered by a Nurse Immuniser who has current emergency procedure training and equipment in accordance with state and territory regulations.

Protect against the flu with an annual vaccination

We offer both in-clinic and onsite flu programs that are flexible and affordable. To talk to someone about organising your flu program this year contact us on:



1300 339 557



sonichealthplus.com.au



LEARN MORE

Sources: Australian Government Department of Health, World Health Organisation, Australian Influenza

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