

# 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. You should see your local doctor if you are concerned about the symptoms or if the symptoms are getting worse. Antiviral medication may be prescribed by your doctor if you are at risk of complications from the flu. Antiviral medication needs to be started within 48 hours from the onset of 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.



### 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 recommends 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
- Impaired immunity
- Malignant cancers
- Pregnant women
- Chronic neurological disorders

### 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 these people that their symptoms will last only a few days whereas if they caught influenza they would be unwell for far longer.



### WHO SHOULD DISCUSS THE FLU VACCINATION WITH THEIR GP FIRST?

- People who are severely allergic to chicken products such as eggs and feathers
- 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 (Coumardin, Marevan)
  - Theophylline Austin (Nuelin, Theo-Dur)
  - Phenytoin (Dilantin)

Although no harm is done having the flu vaccination with these medications, it can sometimes increase the toxicity of your medications and therefore should be administered under the supervision of your regular doctor.



### 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 20 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.



### 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 registered nurse 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



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LEARN MORE



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

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