

FAQ – INFLUENZA (FLU)

Influenza Information

The flu is a highly contagious respiratory infection which spreads when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The flu is much more than the common cold. Some people affected by the flu may have mild symptoms, however others can be restricted to bed for a week or more and unable to work or care for their family. For some people, flu can cause severe illness, hospitalisation and life-threatening complications. Those more at risk of serious symptoms are babies, people aged over 65 years, people with underlying illnesses and pregnant women.

What strains are in this years vaccine:

The 2023 Quadrivalent Influenza vaccine contains the following inactive (dead) strains:

- A/Sydney/5/2021 (H1N1)pdm09 – like strain (A/Sydney/5/2021, SAN-013)
- A/Darwin/9/2021 (H3N2) - like strain (A/Darwin/9/2021, SAN-010)
- B/Austria/1359417/2021- like strain (B/Michigan/01/2021, wild type)
- B/Phuket/3073/2013 - like strain (B/Phuket/3073/2013, wild type)

Is there a combined Flu & Covid vaccine?

Whilst they are working on a combined vaccine this will not be available for the 2023 season.

Do I need a covid booster?

To keep up to date with covid vaccination recommendations click the below link or go to this website

<https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/covid-19-vaccines/advice-for-providers/clinical-guidance/clinical-recommendations>

Can I get a flu vaccine at the same time as a COVID-19 vaccine?

The Covid vaccine and Influenza vaccine can be co-administered i.e., given at the same time. Further information can be found in the above link or website.

Will the flu vaccine protect me against COVID-19?

Unfortunately having a flu shot won't protect you against Covid. Each virus triggers a different immune response from our body to fight it. You will need both the covid and influenza vaccines to be protected.

I had a flu shot last year why do I need another one?

Flu viruses are constantly changing, so flu vaccines are updated from one season to the next to protect against the viruses that research suggests will be common during the upcoming flu season.

To read more about this years recommendations click on the below link or go to this website:

<https://www.tga.gov.au/resources/publication/meeting-statements/aivc-recommendations-composition-influenza-vaccines-australia-2023>

Will I get the flu from the flu shot?

No, you cannot catch the flu from the flu shot. The influenza vaccine is composed of **Inactivated (dead)** Quadrivalent Influenza Strains. A general feeling of unwellness is the body creating the antibodies it needs to fight off the flu virus. It can take up to 2 weeks for your body to build its immunity after your vaccination.

Are there side effects of the flu vaccine?

Side effects of the flu vaccine are generally mild. They may start a few hours after vaccination and generally last less than 1-2 days. Side effects may include:

- localised pain, redness and swelling at the injection site
- a small, hard lump (nodule) at the injection-site (can last 1-2 weeks)
- drowsiness or tiredness
- muscle aches
- A low-grade temperature (fever), which may be managed with paracetamol.

Very rarely, more serious side effects can occur following administration of the flu vaccine. They can include hives, angioedema and anaphylaxis. If you are concerned that your side effects are severe or persistent, please contact your GP, visit your nearest hospital emergency department or call '000' immediately.

How can I prevent getting and spreading the flu?

- Having an annual vaccination each year between April and June prior to the peak of the flu season (June – September) is your best protection.
- Observing good hand hygiene, including regular and thorough hand washing with soap or hand sanitiser reduces the spread of the virus.
- Coughing etiquette, including the use of a tissue to cover your nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing, and disposing of the tissue immediately.
- Stay at home while you are unwell. In particular, avoid going to work or school or visiting busy public places.

How do I get a vaccination through my workplace vaccination program?

Your company has chosen to use vouchers for the workplace vaccinations. These can be accessed through the links provided by your organisation.

Will I receive an email confirmation with my voucher?

Yes, you will receive an email containing your voucher with instructions on how to book with the pharmacy chain you have selected to download a voucher for.

How do I manage my appointment?

You can manage your appointment through the confirmation you receive from the pharmacy when you have made an online booking. Pharmacy's may also take bookings over the phone.

Do I receive a record of the flu vaccination?

Your Influenza vaccination is recorded to the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR). For this reason, you are asked to provide your personal details, including Medicare information when making your online booking with the pharmacy. Once you have been vaccinated the pharmacy will record your influenza vaccination with AIR. You will be able to access your influenza vaccination record through your myGov account. If you have any issues with your record, you can contact the pharmacy where you received your vaccination.

Keep yourself and those close to you healthy! Join the millions of people who get their yearly flu shot