

2021 INFLUENZA VACCINE CONSENT INFORMATION

Please read this before getting vaccinated

Influenza ("flu") is a contagious disease that spreads around Australia each year. Influenza can occur at any time of the year but is more likely to occur between June and October.

Flu is caused by influenza viruses and is spread mainly by coughing and sneezing.

Anyone can get the flu. Symptoms come on suddenly and may last several days. They can include fever/chills, sore throat, muscle aches, fatigue, cough, headache or runny or stuffy nose. Most people who get the flu need several days off work.

Flu can make some people much sicker than others. Anyone can get seriously ill, but young children, people 65 and older, Indigenous people, pregnant women, and people with certain health conditions such as heart, lung or kidney disease, nervous system disorders, or a weakened immune system are more likely to get sicker. Flu vaccination is especially important for these people and anyone in close contact with them.

Flu can also lead to pneumonia and make existing medical conditions worse. It can cause diarrhoea and seizures in children. Each year thousands of people in Australia die from flu, and many more are hospitalised.

Flu vaccine is the best protection against flu and its complications. Flu vaccine also helps prevent spreading flu from person to person.

Influenza Vaccine

You are getting an *inactivated* flu vaccine which provides protection against four different strains of the flu. It does not contain any live influenza virus and cannot give you the flu. The strains in this year's vaccines are:

- A/Victoria/2019 (H1N1);
- A/Hong Kong/2019 (H3N2);
- B/Washington/2019 (Victoria lineage); and
- B/Phuket/2013 (Yamagata lineage)

Flu viruses are always changing. Each year's flu vaccine is made to protect against the four flu viruses that are likely to cause disease that year. It cannot prevent all cases of flu, but it is the best defence against the disease. Flu vaccination is recommended every year. It takes about 2 weeks for protection to develop after the vaccination, and protection lasts several months to a year. Some illnesses that are not caused by influenza virus are often mistaken for flu. Flu vaccine will not prevent

these illnesses. The vaccine can only prevent influenza.

Special information for people aged over 65

People aged over 65 are more likely to get very sick from the flu and traditional vaccines don't work as well in older people.

As a result, there is a stronger vaccine recommended for older people which is only available from your GP. If you are over 65, we recommend you discuss flu vaccination with your GP. If you are unable to see your GP, the vaccine administered by us will still provide better protection than not getting vaccinated.

Who Should NOT Be Vaccinated?

People who are allergic to influenza vaccines or any of the components in the vaccine should NOT be vaccinated. People who have previously had Guillian-Barré syndrome should seek specialist medical advice before receiving vaccination.

Flu Vaccine and COVID-19 Vaccine

You should not receive a flu vaccine and COVID-19 vaccine within two weeks of each other. This is not due to concerns about safety or effectiveness but doing so might cause stronger common side effects.

What are the Possible Side Effects of the Vaccine?

With a vaccine, like any medicine, there is a chance of side effects. These are usually mild and go away on their own within 1-2 days. Serious reactions are very rare.

Common side effects following flu vaccine may include soreness, redness, swelling or burning at the injection site, muscle aches, low grade fever, headache, and fatigue.

Management of Common Side Effects

Applying a cool wet cloth to the site and paracetamol are effective methods to respond to fever or injection swelling or redness. Sometimes small, hard lumps (injection site nodules) may persist for some weeks or months but are no cause for concern and require no treatment. If symptoms continue or you are concerned see your GP.

Serious Side Effects

Severe allergic reactions are rare but could occur after any vaccine (estimated less than 1 in a million doses). Please stay in the vicinity of the clinic for 15 minutes after vaccination and if this occurs, advise the nurse or phone 000 for an ambulance or attend your nearest hospital if the clinic has finished.

**Please see your GP or call VaxWorks on 1300 34 84 22
if you are concerned about a possible reaction to the vaccine**