



THE FLU VACCINE -YOUR BEST *SHOT* AT STOPPING THE FLU

LHI Retirement Services' focus is protecting the health and wellbeing of our residents and clients, together with employees, volunteers and families. To help you prepare for the 2022 Influenza (flu) season and protect your loved ones, please refer to the following information guide.

General Facts

- Vaccination is the most effective way of reducing the impact of influenza in the community
- The influenza virus can spread quickly and easily in residential aged care facilities and in close-knit accommodation
- The elderly are more vulnerable to serious complications from the influenza virus
- To protect yourself and the people you love, you should get vaccinated every year. The influenza virus is always changing so the influenza vaccine changes too.
- Getting the vaccine from April will provide protection during the peak influenza period in Australia, usually between June and September
- Practicing good hygiene is also an important way to help prevent the spread of influenza in the community including good hand hygiene, cough etiquette, social distancing, getting fresh air and exercise
- Flu vaccination is currently mandatory for anyone working or visiting a Residential Care Home

What is influenza?

Influenza is caused by a virus that can infect your nose, throat and sometimes lungs. It spreads easily from person to person through coughing, sneezing and close physical contact, such as happens when caring for residents.

Influenza symptoms such as fever, headache, tiredness and muscle aches can start suddenly. Elderly people might also experience confusion. Symptoms can last for a week or more. When severe, complications such as pneumonia or worsening of existing medical conditions can lead to hospitalisation and sometimes death.

Why should I get the influenza vaccine?

Every year the influenza vaccine changes to match the influenza viruses that are most likely to be circulating during the influenza season. Getting vaccinated every year is the best way of preventing influenza and any of its complications.

Vaccination against influenza is an important way of preventing the spread of the influenza virus. It is especially important for elderly and residents of aged care facilities where the influenza virus can spread quickly and easily.

Where can I get the influenza vaccine?

The vaccines will be available at your GP, pharmacy, local council, community health centre and Aboriginal health centre.

People aged 65 years and older and those with certain existing medical conditions under the age of 65 years can receive a free influenza vaccine under the National Immunisation Program each year. A specific influenza vaccine is available to provide better protection for people aged 65 years and older.

When should I get the influenza vaccine?

It usually takes up to 2 weeks for the flu vaccine to provide protection. It's important to make sure you are protected in time for when influenza is most common in Australia, between June and September. Make sure you get the details of the vaccination for your records and ask your immunisation provider to report the vaccination to the Australian Immunisation Register.

Is the vaccine safe?

The influenza vaccine does not contain any live virus, so you cannot get influenza from the vaccine.

Some people might experience side effects within one to two days after influenza vaccination. This may include soreness, redness, discomfort and swelling at the injection site, tiredness, muscle aches and low fever. These side effects are usually mild and go away within a few days without any treatment.

It is safe for people with an egg allergy to have influenza vaccines. However, people with a history of serious allergic reactions (anaphylaxis) to egg should receive their influenza vaccine in a medical facility with staff experienced in recognising and treating anaphylaxis.

If you have experienced any of the following talk to your immunisation provider before getting an influenza vaccine:

- a serious allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) following a previous influenza vaccination
- a serious allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to any influenza vaccine ingredient.

What other ways can I help prevent the spread of flu?

Practicing good personal hygiene is also an important way to prevent the spread of influenza in the community and shared facilities. This includes:

- Washing your hands regularly before and after contact with others and before handling food. Using soap and water is preferable, but you can also use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Staying at home when you are sick
- Covering your nose and mouth with tissues or your elbow when you sneeze or cough. Make sure you throw tissues away and perform hand hygiene immediately afterwards.
- Not sharing personal items.