

Influenza (Flu)

Protect yourself and those around you

This document provides information about the influenza vaccination, including:

- The nature of the flu
- Effectiveness and safety of the vaccine
- Any potential side effects.



Common misconception:

The flu vaccine does **not** give you the flu because it does not contain live flu virus.

About influenza (flu)

Influenza (the flu) is a highly contagious viral infection that affects people of all ages. It spreads through:

- Coughing or sneezing, releasing tiny virus-containing droplets into the air
- Direct contact, such as shaking hands with an infected person
- Touching contaminated surfaces, like door handles or phones, and then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.

Most people with the flu recover within a few days, but for some, it can lead to serious illness, hospitalisation, or even death—especially in young children, older adults, pregnant women, and people with underlying health conditions.

Please note: Patients in all states except QLD can be vaccinated in a community pharmacy from age 5. In QLD, pharmacists can vaccinate infants from 6 months of age.

**please check with your local pharmacy prior to booking*

About the vaccine

Why do I need a flu shot every year?

Flu viruses change constantly, so the vaccine is updated each year based on expert advice about the most likely circulating strains. Getting vaccinated annually ensures you have the best protection.

Pharmacists vaccinating as part of the Guild Corporate Health Vaccination Program use only the most up-to-date, approved vaccines. The 2025 program covers the quadrivalent egg-based flu vaccine for adults under 65.

When should I get vaccinated?

The flu vaccine takes about two weeks to provide full protection.

The flu season usually starts in June and peaks in August.

Vaccination from March or April ensures you develop immunity before the flu is most widespread.

Safety

The flu vaccine is safe for most people. However, it's important to talk to your pharmacist or healthcare professional about your medical history and any medications you take to ensure the vaccine is right for you.

Are there any side effects?

Flu vaccines in Australia undergo strict safety testing by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) before they are approved for use. Like all vaccines, side effects are possible but usually mild and short-lived.

Common side effects may include:

- Pain, redness, or swelling at the injection site
- Mild fever, headache, or muscle aches
- Feeling tired or generally unwell.

Those with an egg allergy, including those with a history of anaphylaxis, can safely receive all influenza vaccines. If you have concerns, discuss them with your pharmacist.