



GUILD CORPORATE VACCINATION PROGRAM

Frequently Asked Questions

INFLUENZA

1. What is influenza – ‘The Flu’?

Influenza (the flu) is a highly contagious viral infection of the respiratory tract. It spreads from person to person through the air by coughing or sneezing or by direct contact with the virus on other surfaces (e.g. people’s hands, hard surfaces). Symptoms of influenza are more severe than those of the common cold and can result in days off work and possible hospitalisation and death. Symptoms may include tiredness, high fever, chills, headache, coughing, sneezing, runny nose, poor appetite and muscle aches.¹

2. Why should I get the influenza vaccine?

Annual vaccination offers effective protection against influenza. While it does not offer 100% protection, vaccination does decrease your chance of getting influenza and reduces the severity of the symptoms if you do catch the virus. Getting vaccinated also protects those around you, including vulnerable groups such as pregnant women, babies and young children, older people and people with certain chronic health conditions.²

3. Is the influenza vaccination appropriate for me?

There are very few people who are unable to receive the flu vaccination. It is important that you discuss your medical history and current medications with your pharmacist or other trusted health professional to assess whether the flu vaccination is suitable for you.

4. What strains of influenza does this influenza vaccine protect me from?

Pharmacists vaccinating as part of the Guild Program use only the most current vaccines available. The influenza vaccination covered under the 2024 Guild Corporate Vaccination Program is the quadrivalent egg-based vaccine indicated for adults under the age of 65. It provides protection against the below four strains³ of influenza:

- an A/Victoria/4897/2022 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus;
- an A/Thailand/8/2022 (H3N2)-like virus;
- a B/Austria/1359417/2021 (B/Victoria lineage)-like virus; and
- a B/Phuket/3073/2013 (B/Yamagata lineage)-like virus.

5. Is the influenza vaccine safe?

All influenza vaccines currently available in Australia are associated with a very low incidence of side effects in adults. Vaccines, like all medicines in Australia, must pass stringent safety testing before being approved for use by the Therapeutic Goods Administration.¹

6. What are the possible side effects of the influenza vaccine?

Like with any medication, some people can experience mild side effects from the vaccine. Side effects may include pain, redness and swelling at the injection site, low grade fever, headache or muscle aches, tiredness and generally feeling unwell. Most side effects are short-lived (6-12 hours), however, you may also experience mild influenza-like symptoms for up to 48 hours as your immune system responds to the vaccine. It is rare for a severe allergic reaction to occur.² If you feel unwell after your vaccination, please see your pharmacist or doctor.



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7. How effective is the influenza vaccine?

No vaccine is 100% effective, however, there is much evidence to show that the influenza vaccine provides a good level of protection against the virus in healthy people.² The ability of the influenza vaccine to protect you depends on numerous factors such as your age and health status, as well as how similar the ingredients of the vaccine are compared to the seasonal influenza virus to which you may be exposed.⁴ It is important to remember that even when the viruses are not 100% matched, the vaccine can still offer protection and prevent influenza-related complications (e.g. medical complications or hospitalisation).⁵

8. Will the influenza vaccination give me the flu?

No. The influenza vaccine cannot give you the flu as there is no live influenza virus in the vaccine.^{1,2}

9. Where is the influenza vaccination administered?

The influenza vaccination is administered into the muscle at the top of the arm, the deltoid muscle.²

10. How long does it take for the influenza vaccination to be effective?

The flu vaccine normally takes two weeks for the vaccine to become effective and for immunity to develop after vaccination.⁷

11. When is it best to be vaccinated against influenza?

As the influenza season normally starts in June, with the peak usually falling around August, vaccinating from March or April allows individuals to develop immunity before transmission of influenza is commonly at its highest.¹

12. Do I need the influenza vaccination every year?

Yes. Annual vaccination is recommended as immunity from influenza vaccination does not last longer than one season. The composition of the vaccine changes each year to protect against the most recent influenza virus strains.¹

13. I've had the flu in the past, do I still need to be vaccinated?

Yes. Vaccination is highly recommended even if you have had influenza before. There are many different strains of the influenza virus that change from year to year, so it is difficult to build immunity without a vaccination.⁵

14. Will getting the flu vaccine prevent me getting COVID-19?

No. There are separate vaccines for COVID-19.⁹ However, being vaccinated against the flu will help to reduce the severity and spread of seasonal influenza which could lower a person's immunity and make them more susceptible to other illnesses, such as COVID-19. Recommendations have not changed regarding the ideal time to vaccinate against the flu.

15. How long do I need to wait between the COVID-19 and flu vaccinations?

The ATAGI advice states that influenza vaccines can be co-administered (i.e. on the same day) with the COVID-19 vaccines.¹⁰



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References

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