



Influenza can disrupt your life^{1,2}

Vaccination is the most simple and effective way to prevent influenza & its complications.³

What is influenza?^{1,4}

Seasonal influenza is a contagious disease caused by the A & B strains of the influenza virus. Influenza is often classified as a respiratory disease, but may affect the whole body.

The infection:

- begins suddenly
- may keep you in bed for several days
- may take up to 2 weeks to fully recover
- can disrupt your work life or holiday plans
- can result in serious complications in high risk individuals

Anyone can become sick with influenza, even you^{1,3,4}

Even people who are healthy and fit can become sick with influenza. Some people are at higher risk of developing serious complications from influenza including the very young, the elderly, pregnant women and those with serious medical conditions. To learn more, please speak with a healthcare professional.

Influenza can spread easily. You can unknowingly infect others, as you may be contagious 1 day before and up to 5 days after symptoms to appear.

Influenza is a highly contagious disease that spreads via:

- sneezing
- coughing
- touching contaminated objects and transferring germs to the respiratory system

How to protect against influenza^{1,3,5,6}

Annual influenza vaccination is the most simple and effective protection against influenza and its complications. **To maximise protection for you and the community, Australian Health Authorities recommend everyone aged 6 months or over have their influenza vaccination every year.**

Vaccination prepares your immune system to fight influenza viruses by causing your body to produce antibodies which can provide protection against influenza. This reduces your risk of catching influenza and also may protect those around you by preventing passing on this disease.

In addition to vaccination, there are other important practices that you can take to reduce your chances of getting sick and passing onto others:

- Wash your hands frequently and be sure to dry them properly
- Avoid people that sneeze or cough
- Please use a tissue to sneeze and cough into and discard immediately
- If you are unwell, please stay home.

Why it is important to get vaccinated every year^{1,4}

There are two main reasons for getting a yearly influenza vaccine:

- The influenza virus is constantly changing, so the vaccine must change too. Vaccines may be updated each season to protect against the most recent and common circulating strains.
- A person's immune protection from influenza vaccination declines over time so annual vaccination is recommended.

The best time to be vaccinated against influenza is from April to May in anticipation of winter outbreaks.¹

Vaccine Safety^{1,4,7}

Seasonal influenza vaccines available in Australia can not give you influenza. The vaccines available in Australia do not contain 'live' virus. They strengthen your natural immune system by helping it to recognise the virus.

Common side effects include:



soreness, redness,
pain & swelling
at injection site



fatigue



low grade
fever



muscle
aches

These side effects are usually mild and go away within a few days, usually without any treatment. Any medicine, including influenza vaccines can have potentially serious side effects, but these are very rare. You should contact your doctor if you are concerned or your child has a persistent high temperature.

The difference between influenza, a cold and COVID-19⁸⁻¹³

Influenza, the common cold & COVID-19 are all contagious respiratory illnesses but they are caused by different viruses.

Symptoms & Disease Impact

They do share some similar symptoms. With a cold you generally only experience mild symptoms, but influenza and COVID-19 can cause serious respiratory illness and can lead to severe complications like pneumonia. **It's important to be aware of the symptoms and to get tested to confirm your diagnosis.** (See the following page to learn more.)

The combination of both influenza & COVID-19 could be life threatening, especially for our vulnerable people.

Vaccines available

Vaccines are available for the prevention of influenza and there are COVID-19 vaccines in development that hope to be available to Australians in 2021. There is no vaccine for the common cold.

Is it a cold, influenza or COVID-19?

Be aware of the symptoms you may experience.
Getting tested is the only way to know which disease you have.

If you have any of these symptoms listed below (even if mild), please see a healthcare professional to get tested.

COMMON COLD *Gradual onset of symptoms^{9,13}*



Runny or
stuffy nose



Sneezing



Sore throat



Mild to moderate
chest discomfort

COVID-19 *Symptoms range from mild to severe^{13,14,15}*



Fever
or chills



Cough



Sore or
scratchy throat



New loss of
taste or smell



Shortness
of breath

Some people may be able to spread COVID-19 without showing any symptoms.¹⁶

INFLUENZA *Abrupt onset of symptoms^{13,16,17}*



Fever or
chills



Cough



Sore
throat



Body
aches

An annual influenza vaccination is the most simple & effective
way to prevent influenza and its complications.³

*This list is not exhaustive, and other symptoms
may be present or overlapping.*

For further information speak to your healthcare professional.

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