

National Media Alert

EMBARGOED THU, APRIL 2, 2020, 4.00 am



Latest data shows Australians are keen to protect themselves from Influenza this year!

Australians listening to the call – 62% of Australians want to get vaccinated to avoid a double infection with Influenza and COVID-19.

The Immunisation Coalition, Australia’s leading voice on Immunisation released data from their Annual Influenza Consumer Survey today. “Coronavirus and influenza are both dangerous on their own, but we now have two viruses that lead to respiratory infections spreading at once. We support the position of the RACGP and Minister Hunt’s call to book the influenza vaccination now”, says Dr Rod Pearce, Chairman of the Immunisation Coalition.

And he calls for people to book their influenza vaccination now! Booking will ensure that vaccination can take place in an orderly fashion.

The survey data shows that 70% of people intend to get the flu shot “as soon as possible” or in April, (IC Consumer survey 2020).

Kim Sampson, CEO of the Immunisation Coalition explains: “Self-isolation will help reduce the incidence of coronavirus infection and influenza. However self-isolation is not a perfect strategy. The last thing people want is an infection of both viruses, so vaccination against influenza should be a priority.”

It is important to make sure that your vaccination gets recorded on the National Immunisation Register, which will give experts valuable data about how many people are immunised.

Physical distancing in Vaccination Clinics will be key to success

Dr Rod Pearce: “The Immunisation Coalition will work with GPs and PHNs to share best practice models for orderly and safe vaccination clinics.”

Another important reason to get the influenza vaccine is for the protection of the most vulnerable people in our community: From May 1st 2020 anyone entering a residential aged care facility will be required to provide evidence of flu vaccination. People who care for elderly parents and other people at risk should get the flu vaccine.

Details about the National Immunisation Program (NIP)

The Immunisation Coalition recommends influenza vaccination as the safest way to protect the public against influenza.

People eligible for a NIP funded vaccine include:

- All people aged six months to less than five years **(this cohort is newly eligible in 2020)**
- All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged six months and over
- Pregnant women (during any stage of pregnancy)
- All people aged 65 years and over
- People aged six months and over with medical conditions which increase the risk of influenza disease complications

Those that do not qualify for the free vaccine under the NIP can still receive their flu shot either at their GP or pharmacist.

It is important to remind patients that the influenza vaccine is not a vaccine for COVID-19

You really don't want to come down with COVID-19 and the flu at the same time - that would be a perfect storm – so getting the flu vaccination this year really is a must! Get the flu shot and follow all the rules about physical distancing.

The health system will be under pressure in the next few months. People who receive the flu vaccine will be less likely to become patient that has to attend a busy doctor's surgery or local health service.

Facts & figures from the 2020 Consumer Survey

Healthcare & Medical Research Study Australian General Population March 2020, APMI Partners

- 15,203 respondents
- In 2019: 41% of those surveyed had a flu shot
- In 2020:
 - 62% of those surveyed indicated they would have the flu shot
 - 83% of women 55+ said they would
 - 72% of men 65+ said they would
 - Only 54% of people categorised as obese intend to get the influenza vaccine
- Coronavirus and influenza vaccination:
 - Does the coronavirus outbreak increase your intention to get the influenza vaccine this year? 29% of the population said "yes"
- Key motivations for getting flu shot:
 - To not have the flu weaken their immune system
 - To not have flu and coronavirus at the same time – worried about a lethal combination.
 - To avoid having the flu and being worried it could be coronavirus
 - Community responsibility – not having to see a doctor or go to the hospital while the system is already stressed
 - Avoiding the spread of flu to others

All influenza vaccines available in Australia this year have been updated to better protect against the circulating virus strains!

People who get vaccinated are at lower risk of contracting influenza than those who are not. They are less likely to be laid up in bed with sweats, shivers and muscle aches, and take time off work or their usual activities, or to be hospitalised with complications.

MEDIA CONTACT:

**If you would like to arrange an interview,
please send a text message with your details to: 042089 6976**

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For more information please visit: www.immunisationcoalition.org.au
Or join the conversation at <https://www.facebook.com/immunisationcoalition/> and
Twitter <https://twitter.com/immunisationgap>

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About Immunisation Coalition

The Immunisation Coalition is a not for profit advocacy group with a mission to create awareness about the importance of immunisation. Immunisation still provides the best protection against infectious diseases. We work with consumers, health professionals and organisations with an interest in immunisation and government health agencies, ensuring that the information provided to consumers through our website and other communication channels is current, easily understood and scientifically informed.