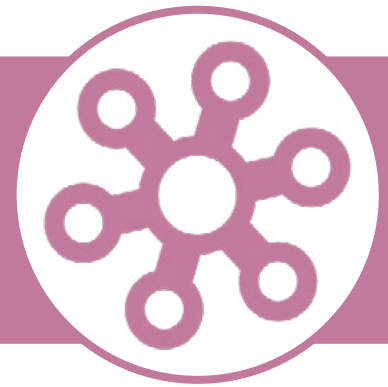


INFLUENZA FACT SHEET



ABOUT

Influenza (also called the flu) is an illness caused by a group of viruses that infect the respiratory tract. Influenza infection may be a life-threatening infection in certain people. Influenza should not be confused with the common cold!

The best time to get vaccinated is from April onwards, unless you have a specific medical condition and/or your GP recommends earlier vaccination.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

In adults, the symptoms can include fever, dry cough, muscle and joint pain, extreme tiredness, headache and sore throat.

In children, influenza may present with a cough, high fever, diarrhoea, vomiting and listlessness.



HOW IT SPREADS

Influenza viruses are mainly spread when infected people cough or sneeze, releasing small virus-containing droplets into the air which can be breathed in by others.

Contaminated respiratory secretions on hands and other surfaces can transmit the infection to the mouth or eyes.

Even people who are not presenting symptoms can still spread the virus.

PREVENTION & TREATMENT

Vaccination is recommended for all Australians who are 6 months of age or older. It is free under the [National Immunisation Program \(NIP\)](#).

Influenza vaccines available in Australia offer a high degree of protection against seasonal illness and the severe consequences of influenza.

Good hand hygiene, social distancing and use of face masks have all shown to be effective at slowing the spread of cold and flu viruses.

Paracetamol and ibuprofen do not treat influenza but may reduce the discomfort of fever and muscle aches and pains.

Antibiotics only work for bacterial infections so they won't work for colds or influenza, which are caused by viruses.

A number of effective antiviral medications for influenza have been developed, which need to be administered early in the course of the infection for the best results.

It's never too late to get vaccinated against influenza! Remember to make a booking with your GP or pharmacist about getting your Influenza vaccination, ideally from April each year.