



Facts about the influenza vaccine

Pre and post vaccination information: please keep this record of your vaccination

What is influenza vaccine?

Influenza vaccine contains proteins from the influenza viruses most likely to circulate each winter. Today you are receiving a quadrivalent influenza vaccine. Quadrivalent vaccines contain proteins from two Type A and two Type B strain influenza viruses. These vaccines **do not contain live virus** and therefore **cannot give you influenza illness**. Influenza vaccine is 70% to 90% effective in healthy people under 65 years of age, when the virus strain in the vaccine matches the strain circulating in the community.

Who should have the vaccine?

Influenza vaccine is recommended for anyone who wishes to reduce their chance of becoming ill with influenza, especially persons with underlying medical conditions. It is recommended for people aged 6 months and over. WA Health provides free influenza vaccine to all employees at WA Health workplaces (including volunteers and students).

Points to discuss with your immunisation provider:

1. Have you ever had a severe allergic reaction following a previous dose of influenza vaccine?
2. Have you ever had a severe allergic reaction following exposure to any component of the influenza vaccine?
3. Have you ever had a neurologic condition called Guillain-Barre Syndrome (GBS)?

What are the side effects of the influenza vaccine?

You may experience minor side effects following vaccination. Most reactions are mild and last no more than a couple of days and you will recover without any problems. Common, expected side effects include pain, redness and swelling at the injection site. Fever, tiredness and muscle aches and pains may also occur. Post vaccination symptoms may seem like influenza infection, but the injectable vaccine does not contain any live virus and therefore cannot give you 'the flu'. Serious reactions following influenza vaccination are rare.

As a precaution, it is recommended that you wait in the immunisation clinic for 15 minutes after vaccination.

What to do in the event of side effects?

Paracetamol can be beneficial for mild fever or pain and a cool damp cloth can also reduce pain at the injection site.

If you have an unexpected reaction, please call your hospital's infection control nurse, occupational health and safety nurse or GP. HealthDirect is also available on 1800 022 222. For any severe reaction, call an ambulance or go to your closest emergency department. Adverse events such as unexpected or unwanted responses can be reported to the WA Vaccine Safety Surveillance (WAVSS) system online at www.safevac.org.au.

Influenza and COVID-19 vaccination

Based on the most recent medical advice, you can receive the influenza vaccine and COVID-19 vaccine at the same time, if required. The COVID-19 vaccine does not protect against influenza, so you should still have an influenza vaccine.

Use in pregnancy

Pregnant women are strongly recommended to receive influenza vaccine with each pregnancy and at any stage of their pregnancy. It has been proven effective in preventing infection in both women and in their babies in the first 6 months of life. The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG)¹ support the safety of influenza vaccination in pregnant women.

The influenza vaccine can safely be given to breastfeeding women.

Australian Immunisation Register (AIR)

Your immunisation provider is required to report all influenza vaccinations to the AIR. This includes some personal information such as your name, date of birth, contact details, and your Medicare card number. Find out how this data is managed in the Privacy Policy for the Australian Immunisation Register.

Thank you. By having the influenza vaccine today, you are protecting yourself and others this winter.

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¹ [https://www.ranzcog.edu.au/StatementsGuidelines/Obstetrics/Influenza-Vaccination-during-Pregnancy-\(C-Obs-45\)](https://www.ranzcog.edu.au/StatementsGuidelines/Obstetrics/Influenza-Vaccination-during-Pregnancy-(C-Obs-45))