

Influenza Vaccine for People Aged 65 Years and Over

Why should people aged 65 years and over get the flu vaccine?

Flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by the influenza virus. People aged 65 years and over are at higher risk of serious complications from the flu than other healthy adults and are strongly recommended to get immunised against the flu every year.

Getting immunised against the flu helps to protect others in the community including those who are at greater risk of influenza complications, such as young children, the elderly and those with medical conditions.

What vaccine is available for people aged 65 years and over?

The National Immunisation Program (NIP) provides free influenza vaccine for people aged 65 years and over. In 2021, there is one vaccine for people aged 65 years and over which is only available from General Practitioners (GPs). This is a quadrivalent influenza vaccine called Flud Quad®. This vaccine covers two influenza A viruses and two influenza B viruses. The vaccine has been specifically designed to create a greater immune response amongst the elderly who are known to have a weaker response to immunisation.

When is the best time to get the flu vaccine?

The best time to get your vaccine is from mid-April as vaccine protection may wane around three to four months after receiving the vaccine.

Receiving a second dose later in the season is not recommended as there is no evidence that this is effective or safe.

The COVID-19 vaccine does not protect against flu – you must still have a flu vaccination to be protected against influenza in 2021. It is not recommended to receive a flu vaccine on the same day as a COVID-19 vaccine. It is best to speak with your GP about when to have your flu vaccine if you are also eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine around the same time.

For further information please:

- Speak to your doctor or clinic nurse
- See the DoH Influenza website www.flu.tas.gov.au
- Call the Public Health Hotline - Tasmania on **1800 671 738**
- Call Immunise Australia on 1800 671 811 or go to <https://beta.health.gov.au/health-topics/immunisation>

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