Medically at-risk and flu

Does your medical condition put you at greater risk of severe flu?

Flu (influenza) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. Most people recover after a few days but for some people it can lead to a severe and life-threatening illness.

People with the following medical conditions are at greater risk of severe flu:

- heart disease
- severe asthma (requiring frequent medical consultations or use of multiple medications)
- chronic lung conditions
- diseases of the nervous system that affect breathing
- impaired immunity
- diabetes
- kidney disease
- blood disorders
- children aged six months to 10 years on long-term aspirin therapy.

Annual flu shots are the best way to prevent flu

All people in the above medically at-risk groups are strongly recommended to have an annual flu vaccine provided free under the National Immunisation Program.

To get a free flu vaccine make an appointment with your GP.

Other things to help prevent flu

Wash your hands often to get rid of the germs you may have picked up. Use soap and water, or an alcohol based hand rub.

If you get sick- don't share it!

- When you cough or sneeze cover your mouth with your elbow (rather than your hand).
- Stay home from work and let someone know you are sick. If your child is unwell keep them at home from childcare or school.
- Avoid visiting people likely to get really unwell from flu, including infants and young children, pregnant women, those with medical problems and the elderly.
- Avoid visiting family or friends in hospital or aged-care homes.
- Stay at least one metre away from other people, especially when coughing.
- Call ahead if you need to see a doctor. This will allow the medical service to plan your visit to prevent infection spreading to others.

For more information

- Speak to your doctor or clinic nurse
- Call the Public Health Hotline - Tasmania on 1800 671 738
- Call Immunise Australia on 1800 671 811 or visit www.immunise.health.gov.au

Resources

- Flu Fact Sheet

Tasmanian Government