



The flu vac

Everything you should know

You may think getting a flu vaccination is a waste of time. It's not. Getting an annual flu vaccination remains your best defence against the flu virus. You see, due to slight changes in the genetic material of the influenza viruses A and B, new virus strains emerge each year. So last year's flu shot simply won't protect you against this year's viruses.

Who's at high-risk?



- You're **65-plus** (if you live in a retirement home, your risk is even higher)
- You have a **heart problem**, such as heart failure
- You suffer from a **respiratory problem**, such as asthma or emphysema
- You have another **chronic illness** such as anaemia, diabetes or kidney failure
- Your **immune system is compromised** (e.g. you're HIV-positive, you're receiving long-term corticosteroid treatment, or you're receiving radiation and/or chemotherapy)
- You've been **hospitalised or treated for chronic illness** in the last year
- You're in the 2nd or 3rd trimester of **pregnancy** (pregnancy can increase your risk for serious medical complications from influenza), or in the first trimester of pregnancy and have a medical condition that increases your risk for complications
- You **care for the ill** at, for example, a nursing home
- You're **in close contact with a high-risk individual**
- You're planning to travel to the tropics at any time or to the **northern hemisphere** between October and February
- You're a **community service provider** (e.g. you're in the police or you're a paramedic).

Children and teens in the high-risk group:

- Those between the ages of **6 and 23 months** – their immunity against diseases is low while their exposure rate is high (especially if they attend a crèche)
- Children who have **chronic heart or lung disorders**, including asthma
- Children who have **chronic illnesses**, as well as those who've needed hospitalisation or regular visits to the doctor during the preceding year
- Children who live with someone in a **high-risk group**
- Children and teenagers (aged 6 months to 18 years) on **long-term aspirin therapy**, aspirin therapy. Reye's syndrome becomes a risk if they catch the flu and run a fever.

Worried about your child's health?

Fedhealth members with children up to the age of 14 can call Paed-IQ on the 24-hour paediatric and support line number 0860 444 128 for reliable, appropriate and up to-date info and advice about everyday childhood health problems.

Paed-IQ aims to:

- Provide young families with 24-hour access to paediatric support and advice. This enhances the level of care parents can provide to their children by means of a paediatric telephone triage service, from a database of information on common health conditions in children.
- Reduce emergency paediatric expenditure and unnecessary clinical interactions for members by offering clinical childcare assessment, triage and telephonic guidance.

Did you know?

School-aged children are 2 to 3 times more likely than adults to get influenza, and to rapidly spread the virus to others. Studies have shown that families with school-aged children have more infections than other families.



Flu symptoms

The first step is to act immediately if you suspect you have the flu. You may experience some or all of these symptoms:



A high fever (often higher than 39°C) with chills. The fever is highest in children and least marked in the elderly



Dry cough



Sore throat



Blocked or runny nose



Sweating and shivering



Muscle aches and pains (the "I've been run over by a bus" feeling)



Feeling unwell in general



Fatigue and wanting to sleep all day

WHEN TO SEE A DOCTOR

- You have a high fever for more than a few hours that doesn't respond to over-the-counter medicine, and you're not certain whether it's due to flu, or not
- Your fever lasts longer than two days
- You feel sick and just don't seem to get better
- You have a cough that begins to produce phlegm
- You have difficulty breathing or feel a sharp pain when breathing.



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Contact our Health Coaches on **0860 106 155**