

WHAT SHOULD YOU KNOW ABOUT FLU (INFLUENZA)?

Flu is caused by the influenza virus:
Previous infection or vaccination is no guarantee of protection against it - the flu virus is changing all the time² and there are many different strains.¹

HOW SERIOUS IS FLU?

While most people have relatively mild flu symptoms;
flu is a potentially serious disease that can lead to hospitalisation and sometimes even death.³

It can cause bronchitis, croup, pneumonia, ear infections, heart and other organ damage, brain inflammation and brain damage.¹

**163,000
CASES³**

Average number of flu cases detected in Australia each year between 2015 and 2020:³



**1,500,000
DAYS⁴**

The estimated number of work days lost to flu and its associated complications each year.⁴

HOW CAN YOU RECOGNISE THE FLU?

Flu symptoms include a runny nose or sneezing, cough or sore throat, fever and chills, headache, body aches, vomiting and diarrhoea (which is more common in children).¹

Most flu symptoms last up to a week⁶ but coughing can continue for up to two weeks or more.⁵



BODY ACHES



HEADACHE



SORE THROAT



FEVER⁷



FATIGUE



COUGH

Flu is **NOT** the same as a common cold, flu symptoms tend to be more intense.⁷



It is very difficult to distinguish between the symptoms of COVID-19, influenza and a cold.⁸ If you have any infectious or respiratory symptoms (listed over the page), self-isolate yourself.⁸

Contact a healthcare professional, you may need testing for COVID-19.⁸

References: 1. Department of Health, Australia. Available at <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/flu-influenza> Last accessed February 2021. 2. CDC. Vaccination Information Statement. Available at <https://www.cdc.gov/VACCINES/HCP/VIS/VIS-STATEMENTS/FLU.PDF> Last accessed February 2021. 3. Australian Influenza Surveillance Report. National 2020 Influenza Season Summary. Available at: <https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/cda-surveill-ozflu-flucurr.htm?File/National-Influenza-Season-Summary2020.pdf>. Accessed February 2021. 4. Mills, James & Yapp, Tim & CSIRO. Institute of Industrial Technologies. An economic evaluation of three CSIRO manufacturing research projects. CSIRO Institute of Industrial Technologies, Dickson, A.C.T. 1996. 5. WHO. Influenza (seasonal). Available at [https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/influenza-\(seasonal\)](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/influenza-(seasonal)). Last accessed February 2021. 6. CDC. Key facts about influenza (flu). Available at <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/keyfacts.htm>. Last accessed February 2021. 7. CDC. Influenza (Cold versus Flu). Available at <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/symptoms/coldflu.htm#:~:text=Because%20these%20two%20types%20of,a%20runny%20or%20stuffy%20nose>. Last accessed February 2021. 8. Australian government. COVID-19: Identifying the symptoms. Available at: https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/09/coronavirus-covid-19-identifying-the-symptoms_0.pdf. Accessed February 2021. 9. Populations at risk for severe or complicated influenza illness. Available at <https://www.bmj.com/content/347/bmj.f5061> Last accessed February 2021. 10. Health NSW Government. Medically at-risk and influenza. Available at <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/Influenza/Pages/at-risk.aspx>. Accessed February 2021. 11. ISG. How Influenza is Spread? Available at <http://www.isg.org.au/index.php/about-influenza/how-influenza-is-spread/> Accessed February 2021. 12. CDC. How flu spreads. Available at <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/spread.htm#:~:text=When%20Flu%20spreads,7%20days%20after%20becoming%20sick>. Accessed February 2021. 13. WHO. Five simple steps to protect against flu. Available at: <https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/five-simple-steps-to-protect-against-flu>. Accessed February 2021. 14. The Australian Immunisation Handbook. 2020. Available at <https://immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au/vaccine-preventable-diseases/influenza-flu>. Accessed February 2021. 15. 2020 National Immunisation Program Influenza Vaccines. Clinical advice for vaccination providers. Available at: https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/03/2020-national-immunisation-program-influenza-vaccines-clinical-advice-for-vaccination-providers_0.pdf. Accessed February 2021.

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What are you doing
to protect yourself?



Talk to your health professional
about **flu prevention and vaccine
choices to match your needs**

flu.com.au
LEARN MORE



WHO IS AT RISK FROM FLU?

IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW FIT AND HEALTHY YOU ARE, OR YOUR AGE – YOU'RE STILL AT RISK OF CATCHING FLU^{1,2}

Certain groups are more at risk of flu and its complications, including older people.¹

PEOPLE WITH A COMORBIDITY may have up to

2.5x

increased risk of **DEATH FROM FLU***

ANYONE CAN CATCH THE FLU

The influenza virus doesn't discriminate.

It can hit unexpectedly – no matter how fit and healthy you are – and influenza can be serious, sometimes causing complications or occasionally even causing death.

FLU IS HIGHLY CONTAGIOUS⁴

Flu infection happens when you breathe in droplets from sneezes and coughs of an infected person, or touch a contaminated surface then touch your mouth, eyes or nose.¹



1 to 2 metres

A sneeze can travel **1-2 metres** and a single sneeze droplet may contain **200,000,000** individual flu virus particles.¹⁰

The flu virus can survive in the environment up to 8 hours or more.¹¹

up to **1 HOUR**



in the air
in enclosed
environments

8+ HOURS



on hard surfaces
such as stainless
steel and plastic

up to **5 MINS**



on hands after
transfer from
other surfaces

Flu can spread before any symptoms show.

You can pass it on to family or workmates before you know you're sick.^{6,12}

You can be infectious to others for over a week¹²



**1
DAY**

before
symptoms
develop

and



up to
**5-7
DAYS**

after
becoming
sick

WAYS TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS FROM FLU^{1,13}

- Vaccination
- Maintain distance or avoid work and activities with symptomatic individuals and households
- If you don't feel well, stay at home
- Wash your hands regularly

VACCINATION IS ONE OF THE BEST WAYS TO PROTECT AGAINST INFLUENZA

The influenza vaccine helps train your immune system to make antibodies to fight the influenza virus. By activating your natural defences, it gives you a head-start when your body is exposed to real influenza virus. Remember, it takes 2–3 weeks to build immunity.

Some people may be eligible for flu vaccines funded under the National Immunisation Program.¹⁵

Annual flu vaccination is recommended for all people aged 6 months and over¹⁴

