



The Hon. Greg Hunt MP

Minister for Health

Minister for Sport

MEDIA RELEASE

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2017 influenza vaccines now available

Vaccinations to protect Australians against four strains of this year's influenza virus are now available – and are free of charge to those most at risk of getting sick this flu season.

I urge all Australians to consider getting a flu shot this year. Annual influenza vaccination is recommended for any person six months of age and older, with vaccines also available on the private market.

It's important to get the flu shot every year, as the virus changes year to year.

Flu shots are available now at general practices and other vaccination providers. They're also available for purchase at many pharmacies.

The flu shot this year will cover two A strains of influenza (Michigan and Hong Kong) and two B strains of influenza (Brisbane and Phuket).

All influenza vaccines available in Australia have been through stringent safety testing by the Therapeutic Goods Administration and continue to be monitored on an ongoing basis.

The influenza jab does not contain any live virus, so you cannot get the flu from the vaccine.

High vaccination rates contribute to a healthy society. That's why in 2017, through the National Immunisation Program (NIP), the Turnbull Government will provide more than 4.5 million doses of the influenza vaccine for free.

Under the NIP, those eligible for a free flu shot include people aged 65 years and over, most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and those who suffer from chronic conditions.

Pregnant women are also eligible for a free flu shot. It's safe to receive at any stage of pregnancy and not only protects Mum, but baby too.

Vaccinating from April allows people to develop immunity before transmission of the virus increases from June, with the peak being around August.

Influenza vaccines are age-specific, so ask your doctor about the best vaccine for you or your child's circumstances.

For more information visit the Immunise Australia website at: www.immunise.health.gov.au

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