

Influenza (flu) vaccine for children

“Have you had the conversation with your doctor or nurse about protecting your child against the flu?”

What is influenza (flu)?

Influenza, commonly called “the flu”, is caused by the influenza virus. It results in an illness that typically affects the nose, throat and lungs and can easily spread within families and the community.

What are the symptoms of the flu?

- Fever and irritability
- headache, muscle aches, tiredness
- loss of appetite or poor feeding
- cough or noisy breathing
- sore throat and runny nose
- nausea, vomiting or diarrhoea

How serious is the flu for children?

One in three children who catch the flu are hospitalised and most flu-related hospital admissions and deaths occur in previously healthy children.

What is the best way to prevent the flu?

The best way to prevent the flu is to get the influenza vaccine at the start of each flu season. The vaccine will give your child immunity for up to 6-12 months, therefore getting the flu vaccine every year is important. WA has a comprehensive vaccine safety system and real-time flu vaccine safety data is available each week at www.ausvaxsafety.org.au.

What about COVID-19 and influenza?

Whilst there is no vaccine currently available for the new coronavirus COVID-19, there is for influenza and this is the best way to protect you and your family from the flu. Many of the symptoms and signs of influenza are similar to COVID-19 (fever, cough and respiratory symptoms), therefore protection against the flu will assist with lowering the risk of developing symptoms and signs concerning for COVID-19.

The flu vaccine is FREE for children most at risk, including:

- All children aged six months to Year 6 of primary school
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, from six months of age onwards
- All children on long-term aspirin therapy, from six months of age onwards
- All children from six months of age onwards with a chronic medical condition, including:
 - Severe asthma
 - Chronic lung disease
 - Liver, kidney or heart conditions
 - Diseases of the nervous system
 - Impaired immunity, including cancer
 - Diabetes
 - Metabolic or blood disorders

Where can my children receive the free flu vaccine?

Visit your GP or for more information about locations of community vaccination sites, visit HealthyWA. Alternatively book an appointment at the PCH Stan Perron Immunisation Centre, Level 1, Clinic D, from 8.30am to 4.00pm. Phone ahead on 6456 3721 to assist with social distancing for COVID-19.