

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 virus strains change every year. The vaccine will give your child immunity for up to 6-12 months, therefore getting the flu vaccine each year is important. WA has a comprehensive vaccine safety monitoring system www.aefican.org.au. Real-time flu vaccine safety surveillance data is available on a weekly basis at www.ausvaxsafety.org.au.

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

- All children aged six months to four years of age
- 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
 - Trisomy 21

Where can my children receive the flu vaccine?

If your child is eligible for free flu vaccine (see above), visit the PCH Stan Perron Immunisation Centre, Level 1, Clinic D, from 8.30am to 4.00pm, no appointment or referral is necessary or visit your local immunisation provider or GP. If your child is not eligible for a free flu vaccine (see above), visit your GP or check the Immunisation section of Healthy WA at ww2.health.wa.gov.au.



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