

Influenza Fact Sheet 2024

Influenza Information The flu is a highly contagious viral infection that can cause severe illness and life-threatening complications. It is spread by contact with respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

It is estimated that the flu contributes to over 3,000 deaths and 18,000 hospitalisations in Australia each year. Immunisation is the best protection against getting and spreading the flu. Annual immunisation is recommended because the virus is constantly changing, and the vaccine changes accordingly.

Clinical symptoms

- Fever and chills
- Headache/ dizziness
- Extreme fatigue
- Muscle aches
- Dry cough
- Loss of appetite
- Sore throat (less common)
- Runny nose (less common)

Complications

- Bacterial pneumonia
- Bronchitis
- Sinusitis
- Dehydration
- Heart and brain inflammation (rare)



Adverse Effects of the Vaccine

Localised swelling, pain, redness and induration may occur. Fevers, tiredness and muscle aches can occur in 1-10% of patients lasting 1-2 days. Some patients may experience allergic reactions, usually related to latent egg protein allergies.

The Egg-based quadrivalent influenza vaccine components for the Australian 2024 influenza season will contain the following:

- an A/Victoria/4897/2022 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus;
- an A/Thailand/8/2022 (H3N2)-like virus;
- a B/Austria/1359417/2021 (B/Victoria lineage)-like virus; and
- a B/Phuket/3073/2013 (B/Yamagata lineage)-like virus.

Timing of Vaccination

- Annual vaccination should occur before the onset of each influenza season. The period of peak influenza circulation is typically June to September in most parts of Australia.
- While protection is generally expected to last for the whole season, optimal protection against influenza occurs within the first 3 to 4 months following vaccination.
- Vaccination should continue to be offered as long as influenza viruses are circulating and a valid vaccine (before expiration date) is available.
- Revaccination later in the same year is not routinely recommended, but may benefit some individuals due to personal circumstances, such as travel or pregnancy.
- Influenza vaccines can be given on the same day with a COVID-19 vaccine.

Contact us at fluvac@redimed.com.au for more information.