

# What you need to know about the flu vaccination



Don't want to take this fact sheet with you? Take a photo instead! It's important to keep this information handy.

Your best defence against the flu is to get a yearly flu vaccine. Although having the flu vaccine doesn't guarantee you won't catch the flu, it will give you more protection and mean you are less likely to experience complications from a flu infection.

Protection against the flu reduces over time. Each year the flu is caused by different strains, which may not be included in the previous year's vaccine.

## Who can have the flu vaccine?

Flu vaccines are available for anyone aged 6+ months. The new vaccines are available from April each year and are free for those most likely to have complications from a flu infection. The flu vaccine is recommended for those with medical conditions as well as those who are pregnant.

If you've recently had a COVID-19 infection you can have a flu vaccine as soon as you've recovered.

If you have a child under 9 years old, talk to your healthcare provider as they may need one or two vaccinations depending on whether they've had a flu vaccine before.

## Giving consent for a vaccination

Before having your vaccine, the vaccinator will ask if you give consent. You have the right to make an informed choice about your healthcare including immunisations.

Before giving consent, the vaccinator will explain to you what the vaccine is for, the risks of having the vaccine, and why it is recommended for you.

The vaccinator will explain what to expect after your vaccine and how and where to seek help if you have any concerns. You will receive this information verbally and take this fact sheet home. There will be time to have all your questions answered and you can also request an interpreter if you need one.

For more information about giving consent, visit [healthnavigator.org.nz/health-a-z/i/informed-consent/](https://healthnavigator.org.nz/health-a-z/i/informed-consent/)

## Please let the vaccinator know if you/the person being vaccinated:

- is currently unwell with a high fever
- is taking blood thinning medication or have a bleeding disorder
- have had a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to any vaccine, medicine, or anything else
- have had any other vaccines in the last week.

## Wait times after vaccination

You will be asked to stay after the vaccination to make sure you are feeling okay, usually between 5 to 20 minutes. If you have had previous allergies or reactions to a vaccine, food, or something else, you may be asked to stay longer. Your vaccinator will let you know how long you will need to wait.

## Recording your vaccination

Te Whatu Ora records vaccines administered on a centralised database. This allows appropriate healthcare professionals to access your vaccine history and will help keep you up to date with your vaccinations.

To understand how we protect your privacy when recording vaccinations visit [health.govt.nz/NIS-privacy](https://health.govt.nz/NIS-privacy)

## Are your whānau up to date with their vaccinations?

Check that you and your whānau are up to date with your vaccinations by talking with your healthcare provider.

It is safe to have other vaccines such as measles, mumps, rubella, shingles, or COVID-19 boosters at the same time as your flu vaccine.

Visit [health.govt.nz/immunisation](https://health.govt.nz/immunisation) for more information on what vaccines you and your whānau may be due for.

# After the flu vaccination



Don't want to take this fact sheet with you? Take a photo instead! It's important to keep this information handy.

It takes up to 2 weeks after having your vaccine for your body to start protecting against flu. As with any vaccine, you may experience some side effects. Most are mild, do not last long and happen in the first few days of having the vaccine. The flu vaccine is not a live vaccine and cannot give you the flu. Some people notice side effects after their vaccine which show their immune system is working and this can sometimes be confused with a flu infection. Serious side effects after vaccination are very rare.

What you may feel	What can help
Swelling and pain at the injection site (hard or sore to touch) Heavy arm	Place a cold wet cloth or ice pack where the injection was given (leave it on for a short time) Do not rub the injection site
Tiredness Headache Muscle aches Nausea or vomiting Chills and/or fever	Rest and drink plenty of fluids Take paracetamol or ibuprofen for pain, if needed.

## Allergic reactions

A severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) is very rare but serious. This is the reason you will be asked to wait after your vaccination. Vaccinators are trained to manage these reactions if they occur and have the equipment for this.

## Reporting side effects

If you experience any side effects, you can report them to the Centre for Adverse Reactions Monitoring (CARM). Use the online form on the CARM website [otago.ac.nz/carm](https://otago.ac.nz/carm)



If you have any concerns about your symptoms after your vaccine, talk to your doctor or practice nurse, or call healthline on **0800 611 116** anytime to get advice.

If you have immediate concerns about your safety, call **111** and make sure you tell them you have had a flu vaccination.



## Post vaccine survey – we would like to hear from

If you would like to take part in a post vaccine survey, to help us monitor side effects, scan the QR code available at your vaccination appointment. The QR code links to an online registration form. Once you have registered, a text will be sent to you. Click on the link to access the survey. Thank you!



## Are you a smoker or do you vape?

Smokers can be more at risk of complications following flu infection. If you would like free support on quitting or reducing the amount you smoke or vape visit [quit.org.nz](https://quit.org.nz) or call **0800 778 778**. Your vaccinator may also be able to support you with resources.

### Children under 9 years who need a second dose

Your child's next flu vaccine is due:

\_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_  
DD / MM / YYYY

### Other vaccines you can book now:

---



---

Ask your vaccinator how to book your next appointment