

About Influenza

Influenza (the flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The best way to prevent the flu is by getting a **flu vaccination** each year.

Vaccinations will be available from early March to 30th June. Please contact OHM for further information at info@ohm.co.nz

All people 65 years of age and over and all people with certain chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease), can receive free annual influenza vaccine from their Doctor as they are at high risk for serious flu complications.

Flu Symptoms

Symptoms of flu include, fever (usually high), headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle aches.

Why Do People Need to Vaccinate

Complications of flu can include bacterial pneumonia, ear infections, sinus infections, dehydration, and worsening of chronic medical conditions, such as congestive heart failure, asthma, or diabetes.

How Flu Spreads

Flu viruses spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing of people with influenza. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose. Most healthy adults may be able to infect others beginning 1 day **before** symptoms develop and up to 5 days **after** becoming sick. **That means that you may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick.**

Preventing Flu:

The single best way to prevent getting the flu is to get a vaccination. This is an inactivated vaccine (containing killed virus). A new vaccination is formulated each year as the influenza virus changes rapidly over time and different strains become dominant.

About two weeks after vaccination, antibodies develop that protect against influenza virus infection throughout the Influenza season. Flu vaccines will not protect against flu-like illnesses caused by non-influenza viruses..

If you have questions about whether you should get a flu vaccine, contact **OHM** at info@ohm.co.nz

www.moh.govt.nz/influenza

Good Health Habits for Influenza Prevention

The single best way to prevent seasonal flu is to get vaccinated each year, but good health habits like covering your cough and washing your hands often can help prevent respiratory illnesses like the flu.

1. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
2. Stay home when you are sick to prevent spread.
3. Cover your mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing.
4. Clean your hands often.
5. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth and spreading germs.
6. Practice other good health habits, sleep well, keep fit, eat healthy foods and manage your stress.