

# What is influenza?



Influenza, or the flu, is a very contagious infection that affects the lungs.

Influenza is very serious. It can result in people being hospitalised, especially young kids under 5 years, people over 65 years, pregnant women and those who have diabetes, lung or heart disease.

The flu virus that spreads every year is different. Because of this, experts need to change the vaccine every time to make sure it gives your body the right kind of protection.

This is why it's very important for you to get the flu vaccination every year.

You can lessen your chances of getting sick with influenza if you get vaccinated.

The influenza vaccine is safe and effective. It helps you to fight the virus and helps stop it from spreading to other people. If you do get infected with the flu virus, being vaccinated can help protect you from getting very sick.

## Symptoms

You will usually get influenza symptoms 1 to 3 days after being infected/exposed to the virus. *Some of the symptoms are:*



Fever



Muscle or joint pain



Sore throat



Tiredness



Dry cough



Nausea (feeling sick), vomiting or diarrhoea (loose and runny poo) mostly among kids.



Headaches



Confusion, shortness of breath – among elderly people.

## How it spreads

The influenza virus can spread when infected people cough or sneeze without covering their mouth and nose with their elbow or a tissue. It can also spread when you touch dirty surfaces that have the virus and then touch your mouth, nose or eyes after.

## How to prevent the spread of influenza

Here are 7 steps to help fight influenza:



Get the influenza vaccination every year.



Keep a 1.5 metre distance from people who cough and sneeze.



Wash your hands with soap and water. Or use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser.



Clean commonly used surfaces with a clean, wet towel. Dry them after.



Stay home if you are unwell. Avoid contact with others.



Don't share items or anything which has touched the mouth or nose.



Cover your cough and sneezes with a tissue or elbow.

## Treatment

There is no treatment for influenza. But you can best manage it by:

- Taking lots of rest
- Drinking plenty of water
- Taking pain medicines to help lessen your symptoms.

## Where to get your influenza vaccination

You can get your influenza vaccination from your GP, community immunisation clinic or pharmacy. It is free for some people. To find out if you qualify, check with your GP or immunisation provider.

## Need more information?

Talk to your GP if you have any questions about getting the flu vaccine. You can also call **13 HEALTH** on **13 43 25 84** and speak to a nurse. Ask for an interpreter if you need one. You can find out more about the flu vaccine, and resources in your language, [here](#).

