

What is influenza?



Influenza, or the flu, is a very contagious virus that can make some people very sick.

People most at risk of getting very sick from flu are young children, older people, pregnant people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people with health conditions such as diabetes, lung or heart problems.

The flu virus changes every year. It can sometimes result in people having to go to hospital or dying. Getting the flu vaccine each year is the best way to protect yourself and the people around you from the flu.

The flu vaccine is easy to access and free for all Queenslanders in 2026. A nasal spray vaccine is also available in 2026 for children aged 2 to 5 years (before they turn 6).

Symptoms

You will usually get flu symptoms a few days after coming into contact with 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

Flu can spread when infected people cough or sneeze and do not cover their mouth and nose with their elbow or a tissue. It can also spread when you touch dirty surfaces that have the virus on them and then touch your mouth, nose, or eyes.

How to stop the spread of flu



Get the flu vaccination every year.



Distance yourself from people who cough and sneeze.



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



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



Stay home if you are unwell.



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



Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or elbow when you cough and sneeze.

Treatment

If you do get the flu, there are a few things you can do to manage the symptoms. These include:

- resting
- drinking plenty of water
- taking pain medicines to help reduce your symptoms.

If you are at high risk of getting very sick, your doctor may be able to give you an antiviral medicine.

Where to get your free flu vaccination

You can get your free flu vaccination from your GP, community clinic, pharmacy or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health service. You do not need a Medicare card to get the free flu vaccine if you live in Queensland.

Need more information?

More information is available at [Vaccination Matters](#). You can also talk to your GP if you have any questions about getting the free flu vaccine or 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 free flu vaccine, and resources in your language by searching 'flu facts qld' or using this QR Code.



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