



# STAY WELL, STAY HEALTHY. BE WINTER READY FOR THE MOMENTS THAT MATTER

**Keeping your immunisations up to date helps you stay healthy during winter, so you can stay well and enjoy the moments that matter.**

People aged 65 years and over are at higher risk of severe illness from respiratory viruses like influenza, COVID-19 and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). As we age, our immune systems change, increasing the risk of serious illness and hospitalisation.

Influenza (flu) and COVID-19 viruses continue to change over time and RSV can also cause serious respiratory illness in older adults.

All vaccines available in Australia are tested thoroughly to make sure they are safe and work well. Vaccination is the best way to reduce your risk of severe illness this winter.

## About influenza (flu)

Influenza is a contagious viral infection which is more serious than a common cold. People infected with influenza may experience severe illness as a result and it can lead to hospitalisation. Those with pre-existing health conditions are particularly susceptible and have a greater risk.

Because influenza viruses change each year, annual vaccination is recommended. The flu vaccine is best given ahead of the winter season.

Influenza vaccinations are free under the National Immunisation Program for people aged 65 and over, who hold or are eligible for a Medicare card.

## About COVID-19

COVID-19 is a highly contagious respiratory disease that spreads through the air when an infected person breathes, talks, coughs or sneezes.

Regular COVID-19 vaccinations are the best way to maintain your protection against severe illness, hospitalisation, and death. They are especially important for older adults.

- People aged 65 to 74 years are recommended to get a free COVID-19 vaccination every 12 months.
- People 75 years and over are recommended a free dose every 6 months.

COVID-19 vaccines are provided free by the Australian Government, regardless of your Medicare or visa status.

## About RSV

RSV is a common contagious virus that infects the airways and lungs. It spreads through droplets when an infected person talks, coughs or sneezes. RSV can be very serious for older adults.

Currently, a single dose of the RSV vaccine is recommended. Protection is expected to last for at least 2 years, based on current evidence.

From 15 May 2026, if you are 75 years or over, and hold or are eligible for a Medicare card, you can get a free RSV vaccine under the National Immunisation Program. Vaccination helps protect you in the cooler months, when most RSV cases occur.

## Where to get your winter vaccinations

Vaccination is easy to access locally. You can get vaccinated by your doctor or pharmacist. Many pharmacies offer convenient booking or walk-in options. If you are in a care setting, your aged care provider will also assist in helping you get vaccinated.

Speak to your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions about which vaccines are recommended for you and where you can receive them.

## Finding the best time to get vaccinated

Winter viruses peak between June and September in Australia. For the best protection, get your vaccinations from March or April onwards.

You can get your influenza, COVID-19 and RSV vaccines at the same appointment or at a separate visit.

## Speak to your health care professional and book your vaccination today

Vaccination providers include:



General practitioners (GPs) and GP clinics



Participating pharmacies



Local council immunisation clinics (available in some states and territories)



Community health centres



Residential aged care vaccination providers (for people living in aged care).

If English is not your first language, you can ask for an interpreter when speaking with a health professional. You can also bring a family member, friend or carer to support you.



For more information visit [health.gov.au/winter-vaccinations/translated-resources](https://health.gov.au/winter-vaccinations/translated-resources)