



Winter vaccines for older people

Easy Read version



How to use this document



Australian Government

**Department of Health,
Disability and Ageing**

We are the Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing.

We wrote this document.



We wrote some words in **bold**.

We explain what these words mean.

There is also a list of these words on page 21.



You can ask someone you trust for support to:

- read this document
- find more information.



This is an Easy Read summary of another document.

It only includes the most important ideas.



You can find the other document on our website.

www.health.gov.au/winter-vaccinations

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About vaccines

A **vaccine** is medicine you usually get through a needle to help your body:



- stay healthy



- fight off **viruses**.

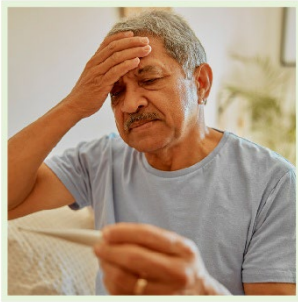


A virus is a germ that can cause illness and spread from one person to another person.

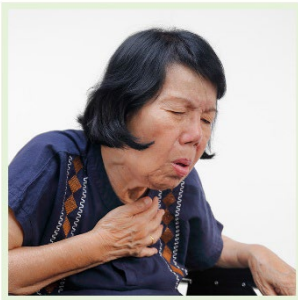


Vaccines are a good way to protect yourself from winter viruses.

For example:



- influenza (the flu)



- respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)



- COVID-19.



Vaccines are free for some people.

We explain who can get each vaccine below.



It's important to stay up to date with your vaccines.

About influenza (the flu)



Influenza is a virus that can:

- spread quickly
- make you very sick.



People often call it the flu.

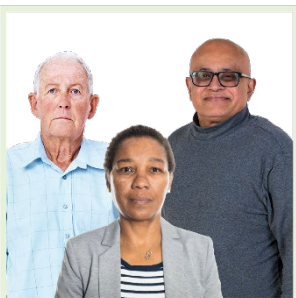


The flu is more serious than a cold.



You should get a flu vaccine **every year.**

This is because the flu keeps changing.



Anyone can get the flu.

But the flu can be worse for:

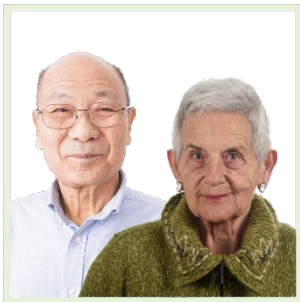


- older people



- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Vaccines for the flu are free for:



- people who are **65 years or older**



- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are **6 months or older.**



You must also have a Medicare card.

Or meet the rules to get one.

About RSV



Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) affects the parts of your body that help you breathe.

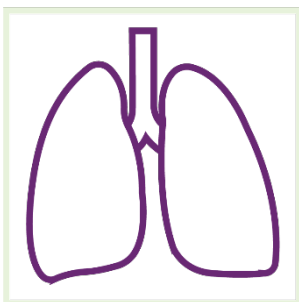
This includes your:



- nose



- throat



- lungs.

People with RSV spread the virus when they:



- talk



- cough



- sneeze.

RSV can be worse for:

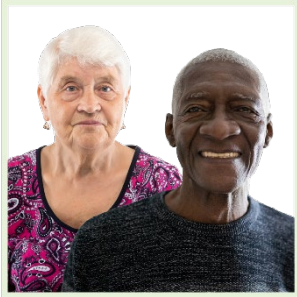


- older people



- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The RSV vaccine is free for:



- people who are **75 years or older**



- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are **60 years or older.**



You must also have a Medicare card.

Or meet the rules to get one.



The RSV vaccine can protect you for **2 years or more.**

About COVID-19



COVID-19 is a virus that can spread:

- easily
- quickly.



COVID-19 can be very bad.



It can make some people get very sick.

People with COVID-19 spread the virus when they:



- talk



- cough



- sneeze.



The COVID-19 vaccine is free for adults in Australia.



People **between 65 and 74** years old should get this vaccine **every year.**



People **75 years or older** should get this vaccine **every 6 months.**

When to get a vaccine



It's best to get your vaccines before winter starts.

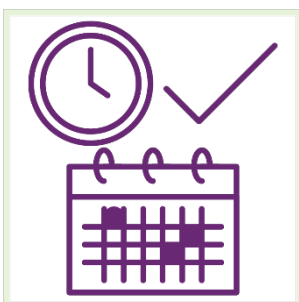
For example, from March or April each year.



It's okay to get your vaccines after April.



Your doctor can support you to decide when to get them.



You can get your flu, RSV and COVID-19 vaccines:

- at the same time
- on different days.



You can also ask your doctor about other free vaccines you can get.

Where to get a vaccine

You can get free vaccines from:



- doctors



- some chemists



- community health centres



- Aboriginal medical services.



Some states and territories also provide vaccines at their local councils.



Many **aged care homes** also provide vaccines for people who live there.



An aged care home is where older people live when they can't live in their home anymore.



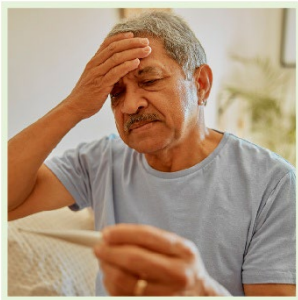
You can find health services on the healthdirect website.

www.healthdirect.gov.au/australian-health-services



You won't need to pay for the vaccine if you have a Medicare card.

But you might need to pay for your appointment if you are getting vaccines for:



- the flu



- RSV.



You can check how much the visit will cost when you make your appointment.

Side effects of vaccines



A **side effect** is something that happens to some people after they take medicine.

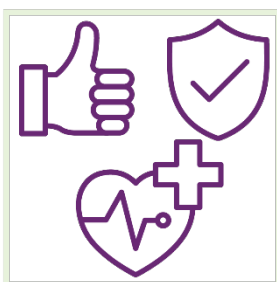
After you get a vaccine, you might:



- have a sore arm

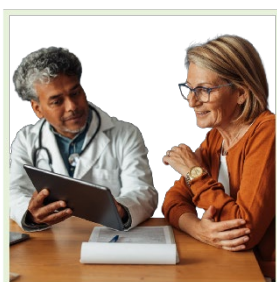


- feel tired for a short time.



The Australian Government makes sure vaccines:

- work properly
- are safe
- keep people healthy.

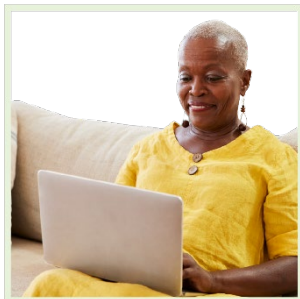


You can ask your doctor about side effects when you get your vaccines.

Checking what vaccines you've had



The Australian Government keeps a list of the vaccines you've had.



You can check the list on the myGov website or app by going to your:

- Medicare online account
- My Health Record.

www.my.gov.au



You can call the Australian Immunisation Register.

1800 653 809



You can also ask for a printed list when you get your vaccine.

More information



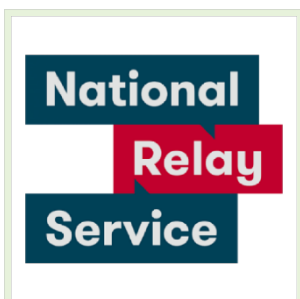
You can find more information about winter vaccines on our website.

www.health.gov.au/winter-vaccinations



You can also find information about state and territory health services on our website.

www.health.gov.au/topics/immunisation/immunisation-contacts



If you have a speech or hearing impairment, you can contact the National Relay Service.

133 677

www.accesshub.gov.au

Word list

This list explains what the **bold** words in this document mean.



Aged care home

An aged care home is where older people live when they can't live in their home anymore.



Side effect

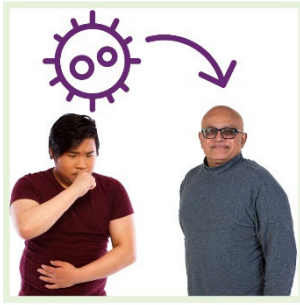
A side effect is something that happens to some people after they take medicine.



Vaccine

A vaccine is medicine you usually get through a needle to help your body:

- stay healthy
- fight off viruses.



Viruses

A virus is a germ that can cause illness and spread from one person to another person.



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