



Brad Hazzard
Minister for Health

MEDIA RELEASE

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PEOPLE URGED TO GET VACCINATED AS FLU CASES RISE

People are urged to get their flu shot as soon as possible with influenza cases more than doubling in recent weeks.

Health Minister Brad Hazzard said flu is circulating widely in the community for the first time in two years, coinciding with ongoing high levels of transmission of COVID-19.

"It is crucial everyone gets vaccinated against flu to not only protect themselves, but their colleagues and loved ones against serious illness or worse," Mr Hazzard said.

"Whilst we know there is vaccination fatigue, I urge the more vulnerable members of our community to book in for a flu jab with their GP or pharmacist as soon as possible.

"The elderly, pregnant women, children aged under five years, Aboriginal people and those with serious health conditions can get a free flu shot now, so please book in."

NSW Chief Health Officer Dr Kerry Chant said there were 1,024 new influenza cases in the week ending 30 April 2022, compared with 478 cases in the previous week.

The latest information on the flu and COVID-19 is reported in the latest [NSW Respiratory Surveillance Report](#), published today.

"Alongside the increase in flu cases, we are seeing more people with flu presenting to and being admitted to hospital, including among young children," Dr Chant said.

"As we have been advising for some time now, with international borders open and increased social mixing, people are at higher risk of flu than during the past two years, when COVID-19 public health measures meant we saw very little flu in NSW.

"This can be very serious especially for young children who have had little to no exposure to flu over the last two years. We strongly encourage parents of children aged between six months and five years old to get them vaccinated without delay."

Everyone six months and older is recommended to get a flu jab. Vaccinations are available through GPs and are also available through pharmacies for everyone aged 10 years and over.

Those considered to be at higher risk of severe illness from flu are eligible for a free flu vaccine and include:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from six months of age
- Children from six months to under five years of age
- People with serious health conditions (including severe asthma, diabetes, cancer, immune disorders, obesity, kidney, heart, lung or liver disease)
- Pregnant women
- People aged 65 and over.

People are also encouraged to continue to keep up to date with their COVID-19 vaccinations. Everyone aged 16 and over should have their COVID-19 booster three months after their second dose. An additional COVID-19 booster dose (or 'winter booster') is also recommended for those at higher risk of serious illness. For those who have had COVID, they can have their next dose three months after infection.

It is safe and convenient to get both the COVID-19 vaccine and the flu vaccine at the same time.

As well as vaccination, NSW Health also urges everyone to continue to take simple precautions against both the flu and COVID-19, including:

- Staying at home if sick and avoiding close contact with other people
- Wearing a mask in indoor spaces if unable to physically distance
- Gathering outdoors, and in well ventilated spaces, or open windows and doors
- Sneezing into their elbows instead of hands
- Washing their hands thoroughly and often.

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