

## What is the flu

Influenza, known as “the flu”, is a common and highly contagious virus that affects your respiratory system. It is not the same as the common cold. The flu virus can cause a mild to serious illness and even death in young children, older adults and vulnerable people of all ages.

There are two basic types of flu – A and B – that cause illness in people. These are called the seasonal flu viruses as they emerge each year, mostly in the winter months.

## What is the difference between a cold and the flu.

| Symptoms                     | Influenza                | Common Cold              |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Headache and aches and pains | Common<br>May be severe  | Rare                     |
| Fatigue and weakness         | Common<br>Lasts for days | Uncommon<br>Usually mild |
| Runny / stuffy nose          | Uncommon                 | Common                   |
| Sore throat                  | Uncommon                 | Common                   |
| Cough                        | Common<br>Dry or moist   | Common<br>Moist          |



## Who should be vaccinated against the flu

Ideally everyone should receive a vaccination against the flu. This would protect those that are unable to have the vaccine, and those that have chosen not to have the vaccine.

Flu can be a serious illness and can lead to other serious health complications. In particular in older people, young children, pregnant women, or people of any age who have a chronic medical condition, such as heart disease or diabetes. Most dangerous influenza cases occur in children less than 4, pregnant women and in people over 60.

By receiving the vaccine, you are not only helping to protect yourself against some strains of the flu, you are also helping to protect people you come in contact with.

## The benefits of attending North Street Medical to have my flu vaccine?

Our doctors and nurses are trained to deal with any reactions or side effects that may arise from having a flu vaccine. Although it is rare for anyone to experience a reaction, it is ideal the vaccine is administered by a health professional who has emergency equipment readily available and has been trained to use it. In case of a reaction, we ask everyone to wait for 10 minutes post vaccine.

## What side effects might I experience from the flu vaccine?

- Any Injection can cause soreness, redness, itching, swelling or burning at injection site for 1-2 days.
- A fever (temperature) can occur after receiving any vaccine. (38 degrees & over)
- A small hard lump may appear at injection was given and can persist for some weeks or months.
- Fainting may occur but this is seen mainly in adolescents and adults.
- Drowsiness, tiredness, runny nose/cold like symptoms
- Muscle aches
- Guillian-Barre Syndrome (ascending paralysis) about 1 in a million (adults)

## How can I book an appointment for my flu vaccine?

To book you flu vaccination appointment, please,

- call North Street Medical on 9274 2456
- book online via our website [www.northstmed.com.au](http://www.northstmed.com.au)
- or via our online booking system - AutoMed.

## What are the signs that I might have the flu?

It's important for people at higher risk of developing a serious illness or health complications from the flu to see their doctor immediately for a medical diagnosis.

If you have mild symptoms and are not at increased risk of developing severe illness from the flu, you should stay at home and rest until you are feeling better.

### **See your doctor if you start experiencing the following symptoms:**

- fast breathing or difficulty breathing
- skin starting to turn blue
- pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- sudden dizziness
- confusion
- a rash
- persistent vomiting.

### **See your doctor urgently if your child experiences any of the above or below**

- very fast breathing or turning blue
- refusing to eat or drink
- not waking up properly or not interacting
- being extremely irritable, and not wanting to be held
- fever and a rash

In some cases, the flu-like symptoms can improve but then return with a fever and a worse cough.

## What should I do if I get the flu?

It's important for people at higher risk of developing a serious illness or health complications from the flu to see their doctor immediately for a medical diagnosis.

If you have mild symptoms and are not at increased risk of developing severe illness from the flu, you should stay at home and rest until you are feeling better.

### **The recommended treatment for mild to moderate flu is to:**

- Take paracetamol to help reduce fever and head and muscle aches.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Eat healthy food.

### **In addition to treatment you should:**

- Stay home from school or work and avoid contact with other people.
- Wash your hands often, especially after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose and before you prepare any food.
- Use disposable tissues and immediately throw used tissues in the bin.
- Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze.

Usually someone with influenza will recover naturally within 2 to 7 days.

Decongestants and other cold remedies will not help to cure the flu. Antibiotics do not treat influenza unless you have secondary bacterial infection (which must be diagnosed by your doctor).