

National Media Alert

EMBARGOED WEDNESDAY, March 24, 2021, 4.00 am



While you wait for the COVID vaccine – book your flu shot!

Experts worry that Influenza might make a big comeback this year if not enough people get vaccinated!

Melbourne, 24 March 2021: Last year, Australia recorded the lowest number of Influenza cases on record. The reason for the success was not a miracle: Australia was in lockdown, and people practiced hand hygiene and wore masks, and last but not least 17 million people – the biggest number on record - got the influenza vaccine. Those combined actions saved about 2800 deaths from influenza in Australia last year.

This year is slightly different. People enjoy being out of lockdown, masks need only to be worn in specific settings like public transport or large shopping centres. People enjoy gathering in pubs and at events.

“Influenza might have a big comeback if not enough people get vaccinated”, warns Immunisation Coalition Chairman Dr Rod Pearce and explains: “This winter, older adults face a double risk of COVID-19 and influenza, both of which are more severe in people who are over 65.”

Vaccination against influenza (flu) remains important this year. While the NH&MRC recommend flu vaccination for all people aged 6 months and over, the National Immunisation Program (NIP) funds flu vaccines for people most at risk. These include people 65 and over, indigenous Australians, pregnant women, individuals with chronic health conditions and children under 5 years of age.

So remember, if you are not in a current COVID queue, get your flu shot now.

Flu vaccines through the National Immunisation Program (NIP) will become available in April 2021. Timing may be different for your local area.

Timing flu vaccination with COVID-19 vaccination

- Routine scheduling and co-administration of an influenza vaccine with a COVID-19 vaccine on the same day is not recommended.
- The preferred minimum interval between a dose of seasonal influenza vaccine and a dose of Comirnaty (Pfizer) or COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca is 14 days.
- There may be circumstances where co-administration or near administration (within days) of an influenza vaccine with a COVID-19 vaccine may be considered.
- There is no particular requirement regarding the order of receiving a dose of influenza vaccine and either the first or second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.

If an influenza vaccine has been inadvertently co-administered or given within a shorter interval than 14 days with a COVID-19 vaccine, revaccination with either vaccine is not considered necessary.

MEDIA CONTACT:

If you would like to arrange an interview,

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For more information please visit: www.immunisationcoalition.org.au

Or join the conversation at <https://www.facebook.com/immunisationcoalition/> and

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About Immunisation Coalition

The Immunisation Coalition is a not for profit advocacy group with a mission to create awareness about the importance of immunisation. Immunisation still provides the best protection against infectious diseases. We work with consumers, health professionals and organisations with an interest in immunisation and government health agencies, ensuring that the information provided to consumers through our website and other communication channels is current, easily understood and scientifically informed.