



10 FLU FACTS FOR PARENTS: PROTECTING CHILDREN UNDER 5 YEARS

1. Influenza burden in children and adolescents

Children under 5 are at higher risk of complications such as breathing difficulties, high fever, severe diarrhoea and vomiting, intense headaches, lethargy, and pneumonia, which may require hospitalisation.

2. Flu spreads rapidly

Flu spreads easily and rapidly through coughing, sneezing, and touching contaminated surfaces like toys, tables, and door handles.

3. The flu and the common cold are not the same

While colds are usually mild and don't typically require a visit to the GP, the flu causes more severe symptoms that can last for several days. In some cases, especially if symptoms are intense or persistent, a visit to the GP or hospital may be needed. Children tend to take longer to recover from the flu compared to a cold and often need several days of bed rest.

4. The best way to protect your child against the flu

Through vaccination. The flu vaccine is FREE for children aged 6 months to under 5 years in Australia. It is recommended annually from April each year. Vaccination may be earlier if the child has a medical condition or is directed by a healthcare professional.

5. Flu vaccines are safe for use

Flu vaccines are developed and manufactured each year to provide the best protection against the most recent circulating virus strain. An individual cannot catch the flu from the flu vaccine.

6. Flu vaccines can be co-administered with other scheduled vaccinations

Your child can have their flu vaccine on the same day as many other scheduled vaccines on the Childhood Immunisation Program. This reduces GP or pharmacy visits and child anxiety.

7. Some children need 2 doses

If your child is under 9 and is getting the flu vaccine for the first time, they will need 2 doses given 4 weeks apart.

8. Keep sick kids at home

If your child has flu or flu-like symptoms, keep them home to rest and stop the spread of influenza to others. A visit to your GP or hospital may be required if symptoms are severe or persist. When in doubt, seek medical help.

9. Teach good hygiene habits

Help your child learn to wash their hands often and learn to cough away from others, preferably into a tissue. Remember to dispose of the tissue in the bin.

10. Children can spread the flu before symptoms appear

Kids can be contagious even before they show any signs of illness. This means they might pass on the flu virus to others without even knowing they're sick. That's why vaccination and good hygiene are so important, even if your child seems well.

