



DFES General Circular No: 53/2024

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29 April 2024

Flu Vaccination Program

Annual vaccination is the most important measure to prevent influenza and its complications and the State Government is providing it for **FREE during May and June**.

[Influenza](#) (also called flu) is a very contagious infection of the airways. It affects people of all ages but is especially serious for babies, young children, pregnant women, and people with underlying medical conditions. It can require hospitalisation and can cause death.

Vaccination is a safe and effective way to protect yourself and your family from serious disease caused by influenza. Influenza vaccines are given each year to protect against the most common strains of the virus.

Vaccination Timing

The highest level of protection occurs in the first 3 to 4 months after vaccination. Vaccination from mid-April onwards is likely to result in peak immunity during the influenza season. However, it's never too late to vaccinate as influenza can spread all year round.

Where to get vaccinated - To get your free influenza vaccine, book your appointment at participating GPs, community pharmacies and Aboriginal Medical Services.

Note: The vaccine is free, however patients may be charged a consultation fee. Check costs when making an appointment.

COVID-19 and Flu Vaccines

The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) has stated that influenza and COVID-19 vaccines are able to be co-administered (given on the same day).

Protect Yourself Against Influenza

To help prevent the spread of influenza, follow these tips:

- cover coughs and sneezes with your inner elbow
- wash your hands regularly for at least 20 seconds with soap and water
- use hand sanitiser with at least 60% alcohol often
- clean high contact surfaces such as doorknobs and phones frequently



Feeling Unwell

If you have the flu, you can be infectious from 24 hours before symptoms start until 1 week after they cease. Typically, with mild flu you will recover on your own without any treatment. You should stay home if you are feeling unwell and keep hydrated. Medical attention should be sought for severe symptoms including breathing difficulty, chest pain, dizziness, confusion, fever, and vomiting.

The National Immunisation Program

Free flu vaccines are also available through the National Immunisation Program (NIP) or State-funded program for people considered most at risk of severe illness including:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 6 months and over
- Children aged 6 months to under 5 years
- Pregnant women at any stage of pregnancy
- People aged 65 years or over
- People aged 6 months or over who have medical conditions that mean they have a higher risk of getting serious disease:
 - cardiac disease
 - chronic respiratory conditions
 - immunocompromising conditions
 - haematological disorders
 - chronic metabolic disorder
 - chronic kidney disease
 - chronic neurological condition

DFES staff and volunteers (and their immediate family members who live in the same household) who do not fit the above categories and have received a vaccination **on or before 30 April 2024** are able to seek reimbursement from DFES towards the cost of vaccination.

How to Claim Your Reimbursement

Staff

A flu vaccination reimbursement of \$25 is available for all DFES staff and immediate family members residing at the same household. Please complete the [reimbursement form](#) and forward an electronic copy with evidence of your receipt to DFES Payroll to receive the reimbursement in your pay.

Volunteers

Volunteers that receive a vaccination will also be able to seek a reimbursement of \$25 through their Brigade, Group or Unit (BGU). A copy of your receipt will need to be sent to your BGU so that a collective [immunisation expense reimbursement form](#) can be submitted to your DFES Manager.



Addition information can be accessed from the following links:

[health.gov.au - Influenza \(Flu\)](https://www.health.gov.au/influenza-flu)

[health.gov.au - Influenza \(Flu\) Vaccine](https://www.health.gov.au/influenza-flu-vaccine)

[health.gov.au - Early Advice For Vaccination Providers](https://www.health.gov.au/early-advice-for-vaccination-providers)

Note – DFES is unable to reimburse for doctor or nurse consultation fees. Submissions for reimbursements will only be accepted **up until 31 August 2024**.

For more information, please contact Scott Goodin, Physical Wellness Coordinator on scott.goodin@dfes.wa.gov.au

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