



Fight off the flu

Description

Vaccination remains one of the most effective ways to protect you and your loved ones from the flu and its complications.

While many of us experience mild influenza (flu) symptoms such as fever, sore throat, muscle aches, and fatigue, for certain vulnerable groups, the flu poses a higher risk and can lead to severe illness and even death. These groups are:

- Children under the age of five years
- Adults over the age of 65
- Pregnant women
- People living with chronic health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease.



Each year, up to five million people globally experience severe flu-related illnesses, including complications such as bronchitis or pneumonia. The flu claims the lives of up to 650,000 people annually. In South Africa alone, around 11,800 deaths occur due to the flu every year.

How does the flu vaccine protect you?

The vaccine works by stimulating your immune system to produce antibodies that fight the flu virus. This reduces the risk of serious illness and hospitalisation.

According to the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD), the vaccine is about 50-70% effective in preventing flu infections. Even if you do contract the flu after vaccination, your symptoms will be milder.

To debunk the myth: you cannot get the flu from the vaccine. The vaccine contains inactive flu viruses, which are safe and allow your body to build immunity without causing illness. Minor, temporary side effects include pain at the injection site or mild fever.

Is last's year's flu vaccination still adequate to protect you?

No, last year's vaccine may not be adequate to protect you in this flu season.

The flu virus evolves each year, creating new strains. Each season's vaccine is specifically formulated to combat the most common strains for that specific year. This is why it is important to get vaccinated every year.

This flu season, the Disease and Medicine Management Strategic team encourages you to prioritise your family's health and visit your healthcare provider or pharmacy to receive your flu vaccine. A vaccination can save lives.

Category

1. Our Wellness