

Australia launches national flu vaccination programme

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It is best not to have the flu and COVID-19 shots too close together

Seasonal influenza vaccines are now available through community pharmacy and GPs in Australia, with a record supply to ensure everyone has access to the vaccine.

Approximately 5 million Australians have already had their 2021 flu vaccine, with over 20 million vaccines being made available through community pharmacy, GP's and dedicated flu clinics this year.

Whilst there have been record low cases of flu this year in Australia the timing, severity and length of the flu season varies year to year and it is not yet clear how hard influenza will hit Australians this year.

Both flu vaccines and COVID-19 vaccines protect against different viruses, both of which are potentially serious. According to the government, everyone aged over six months should receive a flu jab, and all adults should also receive their COVID-19 vaccine when it is scheduled.

The medical advice from the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) is that it is best not to have the flu and COVID-19 shots too close together. If you are due for the COVID-19 vaccine, or have just had one, make sure you leave two weeks between the vaccines.

Children under five, the elderly and people considered at risk of becoming seriously ill from flu can receive their flu vaccines free of charge through the National Immunisation Program (NIP). The NIP offers a specific, enhanced flu vaccine to protect older people.