



[www.aseasonofhappiness.com](http://www.aseasonofhappiness.com)

## **Flu Vaccinations – Why and When?**

### **In Australia, the 2019 influenza virus has proved to be a killer!**

Having the flu vaccination is a matter of personal choice and there are quite a few who believe they are fit enough not to bother. Healthy or not, anyone can contract these debilitating viruses, and seemingly at any time of year. All it takes is to be in the vicinity of someone carrying the disease, or to touch something that they have touched. Neither does having had it previously count for much. Unlike some of the childhood diseases, one dose doesn't provide lifelong immunity.

The problem is the fact that this particularly nasty bug is a virus, an organism capable of mutation. Once present, born if you like, it will do its damage then change its structure for inflicting a later attack, often increasing its potency and severity. Also, being a virus as opposed to a form of bacteria, antibiotics won't work; so the discomforts are there for as long as the body takes to overcome the invader on its own.

Influenza used to be regarded as a seasonal illness, more prevalent towards the end of Autumn and into Winter. This might still be so with the common cold, yet another virus that antibiotics won't fix; and in the cooler months most people will expect to pick up at least one variety; but flu can front up anytime. These viruses seem to thrive year-round in warm climates, particularly in the tropics; and with the advantage of speedy air travel, tourists returning from any of the hotter regions are very likely to return home with an invisible souvenir which they unwittingly pass round the community willy-nilly.

As there is no cure, prevention is the only real answer. Vaccinations are generally available when approaching what is regarded as the 'flu season', usually during Autumn, Fall for our American cousins. Apparently, a single jab should provide a high level of protection against more than one type of influenza virus for most people. Although it can't cater for every strain, one should bear in mind that contracting even a simple head cold can lower the body's immunity; and if this is the case, the door is open for the latest variety of flu to come inside. A trip to the doctor for a flu jab can help guard against this.

Some are more at risk than others. Old people and young children are particularly vulnerable to the effects of these viruses; and catching a bout of the flu can even be fatal. Also those who tend to pick up whatever is going round should seriously consider taking preventative measures before the fact. One piece of advice, though; and this was given to us by our local GP – choose the right time to get the vaccination. The effectiveness of the vaccine doesn't last a year, so we are told; nor even six months. Three months might be a better assumption; meaning that the injection should be administered close to the period when influenza is approaching its peak. Too late and one strain or another will be on you in a flash; too soon and the vaccine may be wearing off by the time infections are rife and inflicting some serious damage.

How will you know when this is? Well, here in Australia back in mid Autumn 2019 we had been hearing about it on the National news broadcasts. Our Western Australian Premier was on TV and radio, reporting the rise of cases, in particular the high number of hospitalisations. Since then, the problem has escalated. The World Health Organisation declares that, as of May 19 2019, the number of recorded flu cases throughout Australia had jumped to more than 51,000. This was the highest in 20 years. If suffering the effects of this latest virus was not bad enough, at the time of publication by the WHO, 85 people had already died from the disease. July is now here and it would seem that the Australian flu season is not over yet.

This year's early onset caught many unawares; and the leave-it-till-later advice turned out to be a huge mistake. Once it was realised how fast the illness was spreading, there was a rush was for flu jabs, creating a critical shortage of the vaccine. The remaining supply had to be allotted to patients most at risk, while the rest of the population went on a waiting list. The shortage is quickly being remedied, but for many it will not be soon enough.

With luck, in your country the flu virus will stick to its old schedule and won't be as devastating; but please don't take the chance. Hopefully, wherever you are in the World, your news services and politicians will keep you informed of current circumstances. These warnings aren't scare-tactics or political vote-catchers: they are based on genuine concerns for every member of the community; because, with the flu virus, what affects one can quickly spread, sometimes to the point of creating an epidemic. From whatever source, ensure you keep yourself informed.

If you've had the flu jab you are less likely to be one of the sufferers; but continue to be mindful of the new-strain factor, because one could come along that isn't covered by the latest vaccination. Employ basic hygiene to avoid transferring bugs picked up from elsewhere back into the home. For more details on this, see our article: **Health HL30 The War on Germs**.

So, get the flu jab when the time's right, and stay healthy. Pay a visit to your family doctor for advice on when best to have it. Provided they have access to your past medical records, he or she will know if there is any reason why you should not have the vaccination. If they give you the green light, bite the bullet and have the jab. One tiny pin-prick is a lot less painful than weeks in bed suffering a dose of the flu – believe me!

**A Season of Happiness - helping you and yours towards a better lifestyle**  
For a look at some more informative articles on a variety of subjects just return to the web page



Where every effort has been made to be accurate and fair-minded, comments and opinions expressed on this website are based on personal experience and do not necessarily reflect the views of the wider community or those groups and institutions mentioned. A Season of Happiness and its staff accept no responsibility for any outcome based on suggestions offered. What works for us may not work for you. Please bear this in mind.