

Influenza Season 2024

Saints' families we are entering cold and flu season!

Flu can occur throughout the year but is most common in autumn and winter. In most flu seasons there is more than one strain circulating in the community.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are at higher risk of getting very sick and going to hospital from influenza.

To stop the spread of influenza, there are effective measures that students and staff can take:

- stay at home when sick with cold and flu symptoms
- cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and sneeze into your elbow instead of your hands.
- wash hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective
- avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth
- clean frequently touched surfaces particularly when people are sick.
- Boarders with influenza should isolate (keep away from others) until their symptoms resolve.

Annual vaccination is the most important measure to prevent influenza and its complications. It is recommended for all people aged 6 months and over. Influenza vaccines are government funded this year.

You need to get a vaccination annually because the protection provided by the flu shot decreases after a few months. Also, each year the strains of the influenza virus can change. Those which are predicted to affect Australians are reviewed and a new seasonal flu shot is developed, which protects against the types of flu that are expected to be the most common that flu season.

You should get vaccinated each year from April onwards to be protected before the influenza season. The peak influenza season is usually June to September in most parts of Australia.

Please note Influenza vaccines are not compulsory for students or staff, but are recommended measures to prevent spread within our community. Combined COVID and influenza vaccines are also available now for convenience.

Vaccination appointments can be booked at a range of health services including:

- local doctors or general practices
- local council immunisation clinics
- community health centres
- Aboriginal health services
- participating pharmacies

Sacha Donaldson RN