



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Get vaccinated against the flu if you're 'at risk'

If you have a chronic illness, Queensland Health's advice is that you should get vaccinated against the flu every year.

Darling Downs Population Health Unit public health medical officer Dr Neil Parker said anyone can get the flu, "but it can be more serious for people aged 65 years or over and people of any age with a serious medical condition, particularly those with heart or respiratory disease, diabetes, heart disease, kidney, liver disease or asthma."

"Even if you're active and managing your chronic illness reasonably well, you have a higher risk of complications like bronchitis and pneumonia if you get the flu," he said.

"This could make your chronic condition worse and put you in hospital."

"Because the virus constantly changes, it is necessary to get the flu vaccination each year, to protect you against the latest strains of the virus."

"It takes about two weeks for your body to build up immunity to the virus after influenza vaccination."

Under the National Immunisation Program, influenza vaccine is free for:

- all people aged 65 years and older
- all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50 years and older
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 to 49 years who have a chronic illness or who are risk of developing a chronic illness.

"If you are in one of these groups, your local doctor can also give you free vaccination against serious forms of pneumococcal infection."

"You won't need it each year, because for most it is a one-off vaccination. It is alright to have the pneumococcal vaccination at the same time as the flu vaccination," Dr Parker said.

"It's never too late to vaccinate. Contact your doctor to protect yourself and others against what can be very serious diseases."

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