



Protect yourself against the flu this winter and be healthy

Influenza (or flu) is a contagious disease that is caused by the influenza virus. Every year, the seasonal flu spreads across the world, affecting people of all ages and has a significant impact on our members' health.

Anyone can catch flu – even a healthy and fit person – but some people are at a higher risk of developing complications of the flu. During the flu season, Discovery Health Medical Scheme observes an increase in the number of admissions for complications of flu. These complications include pneumonia and cardiac problems, which are serious and can be life-threatening.

People at risk of developing complications of the flu will benefit from having a flu vaccination

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, having a flu vaccination is your best defence against the seasonal flu, especially if you are at a high risk of developing complications.

The National Institute of Communicable Diseases (NICD) and the World Health Organization (WHO) recommend that anyone older than 65 years, or anyone who suffers from certain medical conditions has a seasonal flu vaccination.

Discovery Health Medical Scheme pays for the flu vaccine in these circumstances

You qualify for one seasonal flu vaccine from the Screening and Prevention Benefit if you are older than 65 years or if you are registered on the Discovery Health Chronic Illness Benefit for one of the following chronic conditions:

- Asthma
- Bronchiectasis
- Cardiomyopathy
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Chronic renal failure
- Coronary artery disease
- Diabetes (Types 1 and 2)
- HIV

The cost of the flu vaccine for the member(s) mentioned in the email will be paid from the Screening and Prevention Benefit and will not affect your day-to-day benefits.

For members who are not in the high-risk category, flu vaccines will be paid from the day-to-day benefits

Discovery Health Medical Scheme funds flu vaccines for members who are not in the high-risk category as described above, from available funds in the Medical Savings Account. If your plan does not have a Medical Savings Account or you have run out of funds in your Medical Savings Account or have already reached your Annual Threshold, you need to pay the cost of the vaccine from your pocket.

You can get your flu vaccination at your pharmacy or GP

Pharmacy clinic nurses and GPs give flu vaccinations. Any consultation or facility fee and materials used for the administration of the vaccine, will be paid from the available funds in your Medical Savings Account and Above Threshold Benefit, if available on your plan type. If your plan does not have day-to-day benefits or you have run out of money, or have not yet reached your Annual Threshold, you will be responsible to pay these from your pocket.

Frequently Asked Questions about the flu vaccination

When is the best **time to have a flu vaccination?**

You can have your flu vaccination as soon as it becomes available. To ensure you are protected and get the full benefit of the flu vaccine, please go for a flu vaccination before 30 April.

Where can I have a flu vaccination?

GPs and pharmacy clinic nurses give flu vaccinations.

Is the flu vaccination I had last year the same as this year's vaccination?

Flu viruses change frequently, and when they change, the previous vaccine is no longer effective. Therefore, the contents of the vaccine must be changed each year. To be fully protected, a person needs to receive a dose of vaccine before the flu outbreaks begin.

Can everybody get a flu shot?

There are certain circumstances where a person should not have a flu vaccination. This includes people who have had a severe reaction to a flu vaccination in the past and people who have a severe allergy to eggs. Children younger than six months should never have a flu vaccination.

People who are sick and have a fever should wait until they are better before having a flu vaccination.

If you have any questions, it is best to speak to your healthcare provider to see if you can have a flu injection.

Does the flu vaccination prevent flu?

Research shows that flu vaccination is an effective way to prevent flu.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the flu strains circulating currently in the US make this year's flu virus more severe than previous years. This has resulted in a higher than usual number of flu-related hospital admissions in the US.

Our local expert National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) recommends the flu vaccine to be the most effective preventing flu and admissions related to flu complications.

It goes without saying that your best defence against the seasonal flu is having a flu vaccination.

Are there any side effects from having the flu vaccination?

Side effects are rare, however are usually not serious and will disappear on their own in a day or two. The most common side effects mild pain, redness and swelling of the skin at the injection site. Other side effects include fever, feeling unwell, headaches, muscle and joint pain.
