

FLU FAQs

2025

WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO GET THE FLU SHOT?

The most ideal time to get a flu vaccination is before the onset of the flu season, ideally between March and May. This timing allows your body to develop sufficient antibodies, as it takes approximately two weeks post-vaccination for immunity to build up.

However, if you've missed this window, it's still beneficial to get vaccinated later in the season, as the flu virus can circulate throughout the winter months.



DOES BONITAS COVER FLU AND COVID-19 VACCINES?

We pay for one flu vaccine per beneficiary per annum from the Be Better Benefit on all options, up to Scheme Rates. We also cover Covid-19 vaccines and boosters as directed by the National Department of Health.

CAN I GET THE COVID-19 AND FLU VACCINE?

Yes, but experts recommend that there is at least a two-week gap between receiving the flu vaccine and the COVID-19 vaccine to ensure that a sufficient immune response is achieved following administration of each vaccine.



WHO SHOULD GET THE FLU VACCINE?

All members should consider vaccination, especially the following high-risk groups:

- Healthcare workers
- Individuals over 65 years of age
- Individuals with cardiovascular disease, including chronic heart disease, hypertension, stroke, diabetes, chronic renal disease and chronic lung disease (including asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
- Pregnant women
- People living with HIV/AIDS

Please note: Consent is required from a parent, guardian or caregiver for vaccination of children.

WHO SHOULD NOT GET THE FLU VACCINE?

- Those allergic to eggs or egg proteins as the vaccine manufacturing process involves the use of chicken eggs
- Infants under 6 months of age
- Individuals who may have had a severe reaction to a flu vaccine in the past
- Individuals who may be suffering from flu symptoms already



WHERE CAN I BOOK FOR A VACCINE OR FLU SHOT?

Visit www.bonitas.co.za/networks to find a Bonitas network pharmacy or network healthcare provider near you.

If you have decided to go for a flu vaccination, we recommend the following:

- Call ahead to confirm whether your pharmacy or healthcare provider has stock available
- Schedule an appointment, when possible, to reduce your waiting time

THE FLU VACCINES AVAILABLE THIS SEASON ARE:

NAPPI CODE	DESCRIPTION
3000826	VAXIGRIP® TETRA
732826	INFLUVAC®

SHOULD YOU EXERCISE WHILE HAVING THE FLU?

No, you should avoid exercising if you have the flu, especially if you have symptoms like fever, body aches, or fatigue, as your body needs to focus on recovery.

If you have symptoms like fever, vomiting, diarrhoea, or a productive cough, it's a sign that your body is busy fighting off infection and should rest.

Exercise during this time can put extra stress on your system, potentially prolonging your illness.

Once you're feeling better and your fever is gone, gradually ease back into your exercise routine, starting with light activity and gradually increasing intensity and duration.



SHOULD YOU SMOKE WHILE HAVING THE FLU?

No, you should absolutely avoid smoking while having the flu, as it can worsen your symptoms and increase the risk of complications. Smoking irritates the respiratory system, which is already inflamed during the flu, and can weaken the immune system's ability to fight off the infection.

SHOULD YOU GO TO WORK WHILE HAVING THE FLU?

No, you should not go to work if you have the flu. Flu is highly contagious and staying home helps prevent the spread of the virus and allows you to rest and recover.

Your focus should be on rest and recovery as this is crucial for fighting off the flu and preventing complications.

You should stay home until you have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without fever-reducing medicine, and your other symptoms have improved.



SHOULD YOU WEAR A MASK DURING FLU SEASON?

Wearing a mask during flu season can be a good idea, especially if you're in crowded or high-risk environments. Masks can help reduce the spread of viruses like the flu, as they can trap droplets from coughing, sneezing, or even talking. This is especially important if you're feeling unwell or are in close contact with vulnerable individuals, such as the elderly, young children, or those with weakened immune systems.

However, the decision to wear a mask also depends on individual circumstances, local health guidelines, and personal preferences. In areas where flu activity is high, wearing a mask can offer an additional layer of protection, but it should be combined with other preventive measures, like getting the flu vaccine, frequent handwashing, and staying home when sick.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF GETTING THE FLU VACCINE?

Although the flu vaccine will not eliminate your risk of developing the flu, it will help to reduce your risk of developing a severe infection and requiring hospitalisation. It is therefore a good precautionary measure to take.



CAN FLU TRIGGER ASTHMA, BRONCHITIS OR OTHER RESPIRATORY PROBLEMS?

Yes, the flu can trigger or worsen asthma, bronchitis, and other respiratory problems, as it can cause inflammation in the airways and increase the risk of complications like pneumonia.

SHOULD YOU BE TRAVELING WITH FLU?

Traveling with the flu is generally not recommended, as it can worsen your symptoms and pose a health risk to others due to how contagious the virus is.

Rest is essential for recovery, and travel can strain your immune system. Additionally, you risk spreading the flu in crowded places like airports or planes. If symptoms are mild and it's likely just a cold, travel may be possible with precautions like wearing a mask and practicing good hygiene.

