

# Winter Wellness Plain English fact sheet

The colder weather means colds, the flu, COVID-19 and other illnesses are more common. Take steps now to get ready for winter to protect yourself and your family.

## Prepare:

Be prepared for winter by being up to date with your flu and COVID-19 vaccinations– they'll boost your immunity against the flu and COVID-19 so you are less likely to become very ill.

### Flu vaccine

Everyone aged six months and older should get an annual flu vaccine to lower their chance of becoming very ill with the flu.

Some people have a greater risk of becoming very ill from the flu, and a flu vaccination is particularly important for these people.

People with a greater risk are:

- Children aged six months to five years old
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- Pregnant women
- People aged 65 years and older, and
- People with certain medical conditions.

These medical conditions include:

- Cardiac (heart) disease
- Chronic respiratory conditions - like very bad asthma
- Neurological (nerve system and brain) conditions
- Type 2 diabetes
- Kidney or liver disease, and
- People with a weakened immune system and others.

### COVID-19 vaccine

Everyone who is 18 years and older can get a free 2023 COVID-19 booster if it's been at least six months since their last dose of a COVID-19 vaccine or COVID-19 infection.

A 2023 booster is strongly recommended for people aged 65 years and older and people aged over 18 years who are at risk of becoming very ill.

For people who have not had a COVID-19 vaccine before, everyone aged five years and older is recommended to get their first vaccination, plus a booster if they are at the right age.

## Where to get vaccinated

You can get your flu and COVID-19 vaccines at the same time.

Flu and COVID-19 vaccines are available through your GP, some local pharmacies and Council clinics.

Contact your GP or local pharmacy to ask if they have vaccine appointments, or [book an appointment online](#).

Talk to your GP, health care provider or pharmacy about if your vaccination appointment will have any out-of-pocket costs.

## Plan:

Some people who have COVID-19 or the should take antiviral medicines to reduce the risk of becoming very ill.

If you are at a higher risk of becoming very sick from COVID-19 or the flu, see your GP or healthcare provider to make a treatment plan before you get sick.

This plan should say how you will get tested if you get sick and how you will get antiviral medicine if you test positive for COVID-19 or the flu.

If you do not have a regular doctor, or they are not available, you can phone the COVID@homeplus team on **1800 973 363** to discuss your options.

## Protect:

Protect yourself and others by remembering to:

- Stay home if you're unwell
- Keep your child home if they're unwell
- Wash your hands, and
- Cover coughs and sneezes.

If you or your child is sick, you can lower the spread of illnesses to your family and friends by:

- Staying home
- Covering coughs and sneezes and keeping your hands clean by washing with soap and water, or by using alcohol-based hand sanitiser
- **Not** visiting high-risk places like hospitals, residential aged care facilities, disability residential settings, or friends or relatives who are at risk of serious illness, for at least seven days
- Wearing a face mask in indoor public spaces and on public transport
- Avoiding large gatherings and crowded indoor places.

If you are feeling unwell, let your close contacts know. Close contacts are usually people that live with you or are people you spend a lot of time indoors with. They are at higher risk of catching illnesses from you, and then passing it on to others.

**If you are ill with COVID-19 or the flu and need medical advice:**

- Contact your usual GP or health care provider
- Call Healthdirect to speak to a Registered Nurse 24/7 on 1800 022 222. They can provide advice when you're not sure what to do and may offer you a call back from a GP.
- Visit [www.tasafterhours.com](http://www.tasafterhours.com) to find medical options near you available on evenings, weekends and public holidays, including afterhours GPs, walk-in clinics and pharmacies.
- Call the COVID@homeplus team on 1800 973 363. The team can help with:
  - Getting tested
  - Antiviral medicine, if eligible, and
  - Support for people who have COVID-19, flu or other respiratory illnesses and have a greater risk of becoming very ill
- Visit your local pharmacy for advice and treatment for minor ailments and illnesses.



**Winter  
wellness**



**Tasmanian  
Government**