



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Health and Ageing**

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BY: \_\_\_\_\_

**Communication material on the vaccination against  
Seasonal Flu**

Please find enclosed one copy of our new poster and two copies of our new brochure promoting a free\* flu vaccine to protect at-risk Australians from the seasonal flu. The vaccine is safe, effective and free\*.

From 2010 the eligibility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples has increased. The free\* influenza vaccine is now available to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples aged over 15 years or those from 6 months of age with medical conditions that predispose them to complications from the flu. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are more likely to have risk factors which make them more susceptible to flu and complications from flu.

Due to a higher than expected number of children under 5 years of age having fevers with convulsions following their flu shots this year, Australian health authorities have advised that children under 5 years should not get the flu shot unless they have other medical conditions that could lead to serious health effects if they caught the flu. Seasonal flu shots are available free\* for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children under 5 years of age who are eligible under the new criteria (have conditions predisposing to severe flu) and who are assessed to benefit from the flu shot. Parents and carers of children under 5 years of age should discuss the risks and benefits of the flu shot with their doctor or immunisation provider.

If you have any questions about the seasonal flu virus or the vaccination, including information on the suspension of the vaccine for under 5 year olds, you can call Immunisation Australia Information Line on 1800 671 811 or visit [www.immunise.health.gov.au](http://www.immunise.health.gov.au). Extra copies of the brochure can be ordered via the website or the brochure and poster can be downloaded from the website.

Please help us to further communicate how important it is to be protected from this virus by displaying the enclosed posters in your community.

Yours sincerely

Julianne Quaine  
Assistant Secretary  
Immunisation Branch  
Office of Health Protection

5 July 2010

\* The vaccine is free. A GP may charge a consultation fee.



**Australian Government**

## **OUT CHILDREN UNDER 5 YEARS OF AGE**

mal incidence of fever with convulsions found in children under 5 years of  
with one of this year's seasonal flu vaccines, Australian health authorities  
ution, children under 5 should not be vaccinated unless they have other  
ons that could lead to serious health effects if they caught the flu.

ildren under 5 years of age should discuss seasonal flu vaccination with  
sation provider. Pandemic Influenza (swine flu) vaccine remains a safe  
alternative to seasonal flu vaccine.

more information visit: [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)

# The flu shot Do you need it?

## Facts

- From 1 March, 2010, the Government made it easier for more people to get this year's free flu shot.
- Under the National Immunisation Program Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over 15 years of age or children over 6 months with an existing medical condition can get the free flu shot.
- The free flu shot is now available from Aboriginal Medical Services, doctors and immunisation providers.
- Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have medical conditions that will make them more likely to be very sick if they get the flu.
- Flu shots are the most effective way to help fight the spread of flu in the community.
- If you have had the swine flu shot, you still need to have the flu shot.

If you have any questions, talk to your doctor, Aboriginal Health Worker or nurse.

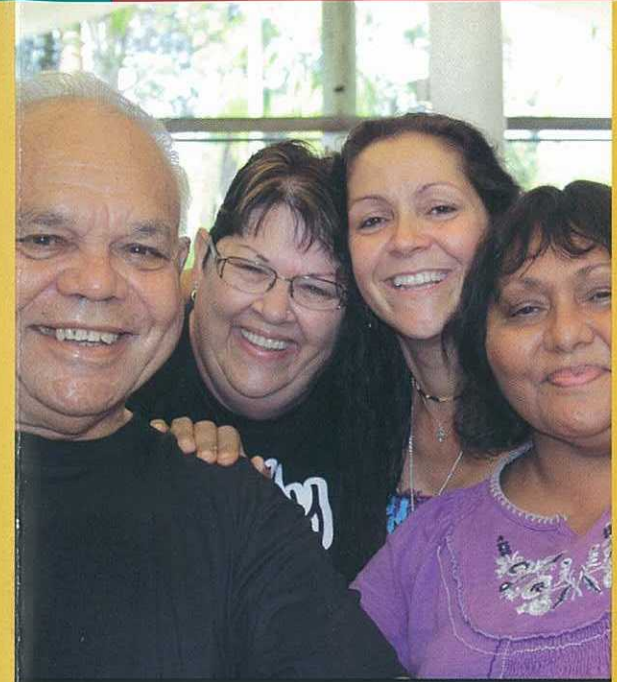
## Current Contact List

### State and Territory contact information

ACT	(02) 6205 2300
NSW	Contact the local Public Health Units (look under 'Health' in the White Pages)
NT	(08) 8922 8044
QLD	13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84)
SA	(08) 8226 7177
TAS	1800 671 738
VIC	1300 882 008
WA	(08) 9321 1312

### National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) Affiliates

ACT	02 6284 6222
NSW	02 9212 4777
NT	08 8944 6666
QLD	07 3255 3604
SA	08 8273 7200
TAS	03 6234 0700
VIC	03 9419 3350
WA	08 9227 1631



If you are over 15 years  
of age, ask about  
a FREE flu shot today!

**IMMUNISE**

AUSTRALIA PROGRAM

An Australian, State and Territory  
Governments initiative

[www.immunise.health.gov.au](http://www.immunise.health.gov.au)



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If you are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and over the age of 15 you need the flu shot.

### What is the Flu?

The flu (influenza) is a virus which spreads from person to person through the air and on hands.

If you get the flu you may get a high fever, bad cough, joint pains, body aches, have difficulty breathing and feel really tired.

Most people only get sick for a week but some people get sicker and need to go to hospital.

The flu can cause pneumonia or bronchitis, and can make some existing illnesses worse. Some people can die from the flu.

### Can the Flu be Prevented?

Yes, the flu can be prevented.

The flu shot protects you from three different types of flu.

But because the flu changes all the time, you need to get a flu shot every year.

### Get Protected

It is best to get your flu shot in autumn. Then your body has time to protect itself before winter when the flu season starts.

You will not get flu from the flu shot.

You particularly need the flu shot if you are:

- 15 years of age or over
- Have a respiratory disease
- Pregnant
- Have an existing illness

### Why?

People over the age of 15 are more likely to get the flu, as well as severe flu. The flu shot decreases hospitalisations and death.

Pregnant women are at higher risk of getting sicker with the flu. The flu shot is safe for pregnant women and will protect the baby.

People with an existing illness can get sicker with the flu. These illnesses include:

- heart disease
- lung conditions, such as asthma
- illnesses that mean you have to see a doctor more often, such as diabetes
- illnesses that you have been in hospital for in the past year

People with low immunity, and children aged 6 months to 10 years who are on aspirin as part of their treatment, also need to get the flu shot to protect their health.

**All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can now have a FREE flu shot if you are aged 15 years and over, or a child 6 months or older with an existing medical condition.**





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# The flu shot - Do you need it?

Every Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person over the age of 15 needs the flu shot.

Some children and young people over the age of 6 months with other illnesses also need the flu shot.

The flu shot will protect you against the flu.

Talk to your health worker or doctor today and get a FREE flu shot.

[www.immunise.health.gov.au](http://www.immunise.health.gov.au)

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