

INFLUENZA VACCINATION INFORMATION FOR AGED CARE VISITORS

From 1 May 2020, all visitors to Australian residential aged care facilities must be vaccinated against influenza in order to enter.

This is a new legislative requirement set out by the Federal and State Government in order to protect vulnerable elderly Australians against this potentially life threatening illness.

Commonly known as the flu, influenza is a highly infectious viral illness that affects the respiratory system. The elderly, people with poor immune systems and those with pre-existing health conditions are prone to adverse outcomes.

Does everyone entering an aged care facility need to be vaccinated?

Yes. This applies to staff, visitors, health practitioners, volunteers and others (e.g. cleaners, tradesman, gardeners and maintenance staff).

The only exception are individuals who have a medical contraindication to the influenza vaccine. This includes a history of anaphylaxis or Guillain-Barré Syndrome following vaccination, or those taking check point inhibitor medication for cancer treatment.

What do the new requirements mean for visiting family and friends?

From 1 May, all visitors seeking to enter a UnitingSA aged care facility will be required to present appropriate evidence of 2020 seasonal influenza vaccination at reception, prior to seeing their loved one. Reception staff will provide clearance to enter.

What kind of evidence is required?

Appropriate evidence, demonstrating up-to-date influenza vaccination, may include:

- a statement or record from a health practitioner
- an immunisation history statement available from Medicare Online or the Express Plus Medicare mobile app

If you are unable to receive the flu vaccine due to a medical contraindication, you must provide written evidence from your doctor or treating specialist.

Am I required to present evidence every time I enter a UnitingSA aged care facility?

Yes, you will be required to provide evidence on every occasion that you visit one of our aged care homes after 1 May.

What if I am unable to provide evidence?

If you are unable to provide appropriate evidence, your access will be denied.

How often do I need to be vaccinated against influenza?

As the strains of flu virus can change from year to year, you must receive a flu vaccine every year in order to enter a residential aged care facility.

Where can I receive a vaccination?

To receive a flu vaccine, contact your doctor, local council, community health centre or an approved pharmacy. Please note: Flu vaccines are free for those aged 65 and over.

Does this directive also apply to residents?

The new vaccination requirements do not apply to residents of aged care facilities. While vaccination for all residents is important to protect themselves and others, residents have the right to refuse vaccination.

Want to know more?

More advice regarding flu vaccinations can be obtained at www.sahealth.sa.gov.au