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# 2026 Flu Vaccination

## Frequently Asked Questions



### April 2026

#### **Is the flu vaccination mandatory?**

It is no longer a requirement for IRT employees to have the vaccine in order to work, but our policy strongly recommends it with support from the IRT flu vaccination program.

#### **Where can I access IRT's Employee Vaccination Policy?**

IRT's Employee Vaccination Policy is available for all employees to access on IRT's intranet page via *Documents > Policies and Procedures > People and Culture > Policies*. The policy has been updated in 2026 to include associated providers under a tiered approach.

#### **When can I get vaccinated?**

You can get vaccinated anytime from April onwards to be protected for the peak flu season. The highest level of protection occurs in the first three to four months.

#### **What happens if I don't get my 2026 flu vaccination?**

You will put yourself and others around you, including our more vulnerable residents and customers, at risk of getting influenza.

#### **Why are flu vaccinations recommended?**

Flu vaccinations help employees directly involved in the care of vulnerable residents and customers to reduce their risk of contracting influenza and spreading it to other people. Infected employees can pass the virus on to others before they even know they are sick. Getting vaccinated is also important for our own health and wellbeing as well as that of our family, friends and colleagues.

#### **What are the benefits?**

Vaccination is the best protection against influenza. It's free and easy, and we'll have someone administering vaccinations on site or via dedicated pharmacies. You will be protecting yourself from getting sick with influenza and the people around you, including your family, friends and our residents and customers.

#### **Why do I need to be vaccinated every year?**

It is important that anyone caring for those most vulnerable are vaccinated for flu every year. This is because the influenza viruses change (mutate) constantly. A new flu vaccine is prepared each year to best match the strains predicted for the coming influenza season.

#### **Who can have the flu vaccination at one of IRT's clinics?**

The 2026 flu vaccine will be available free of charge at our vaccination clinics to all IRT employees, volunteers, students and tier 1 and tier 2 associated providers.

#### **Will everyone get the same flu vaccination?**

The immune system response to vaccinations decreases with age, so the National Immunisation Program has specifically designed an enhanced vaccination to create greater immune response in those aged 65 years and older.

### **I'm 65 years or older – will IRT provide me with the enhanced vaccination?**

Yes. IRT will provide any employee, volunteer, student and associated provider aged 65 years and older with the enhanced vaccination.

### **What should I do if I have an allergy to the flu vaccination ingredients?**

Serious side effects are rare but if you have; a known life-threatening allergy (anaphylaxis) to the flu vaccine, experienced a severe reaction after any vaccination, or ever had Guillain-Barré Syndrome (a severe paralysing illness, also called GBS), you should consult your GP.

It is highly recommended that employees, volunteers, students and associated providers with these medical conditions have the vaccination administered by their GP and email us to let us know: [Vaccinations@irt.org.au](mailto:Vaccinations@irt.org.au)

### **Why do I have to let you know, if it's not mandatory?**

Even though it's not mandatory, the Department of Health requires us to provide a report on the number of staff who have been vaccinated.

### **When will the vaccination be available?**

Our vaccination clinics are scheduled to begin at the end of April 2026.

### **Where will the vaccination clinics be?**

Flu vaccination clinics will be on site at our residential care homes. Vaccinations will be administered by a trained immuniser.

### **What do I need to do to have the vaccination?**

Tier 1 and Tier 2 associated providers are eligible to receive a free influenza vaccination through one of our on-site vaccination clinics. If you regularly attend an IRT. Please speak with your IRT contact to confirm clinic details. You will need to present your IRT contractor pass when attending on-site vaccination clinics.

### **What if I am unwell or have recently been sick? When can I get the vaccine?**

If you have a mild illness, such as a common cold without a fever, you can usually still receive the flu vaccine. However, if you are experiencing a moderate or severe illness, particularly with a fever, it's recommended that you wait until you have recovered before being vaccinated.

If you're unsure, speak with your GP or health professional for advice.

### **Can the 2026 flu vaccination cause influenza?**

There is no live virus in the influenza vaccine, so you cannot get influenza from the vaccination.

The myth that the vaccine causes influenza probably results from a misinterpretation of mild vaccine side effects, which are actually a sign that the body is responding to the vaccine and producing protection against the actual virus for when you may come into contact with it.

### **Is the 2026 influenza vaccine safe?**

Yes. Influenza vaccines used in Australia are thoroughly tested and continuously monitored for safety.

As with any medications, vaccines can have side effects. The most common side effects following the influenza vaccination are mild and short in duration, such as swelling, redness, and pain. Less common side effects affecting less than 10% of people who receive the flu vaccine may include fever, and muscle aches and pain.

Serious side effects are rare. In Australia, we have AusVaxSafety, which monitors the safety of vaccines including seasonal influenza vaccines. Recent data shows that only 0.3% of people reported seeking medical attendance after vaccination (to a GP or emergency department). You can visit [AusVaxSafety](#) for further information.

### **If I'm pregnant or breastfeeding, can I still have the 2026 flu vaccination?**

Yes. The 2026 influenza vaccine can be given during any trimester of pregnancy and also while breastfeeding.

### **If I get the 2026 flu vaccination via IRT, will it appear on my Immunisation History Statement?**

Yes. The Immunisation Nurse on the day will update the AIR (Australian Immunisation Register) with the details so that the vaccination is recorded on your Immunisation History Statement.

### **Are there other vaccines I should consider?**

While the flu vaccination is the focus at our vaccination clinics, it's also a good opportunity to think about other immunisations that can protect you and those around you.

Vaccines such as COVID-19, pneumococcal, shingles, meningococcal, and measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) can help reduce the risk of preventable illness. We encourage you to speak with your GP or health professional to check which vaccines are recommended for you based on your age, health history, and previous immunisations.

### **I am an IRT associated provider. Am I eligible for a free flu vaccine?**

In 2026, the IRT Vaccination Policy has been updated to introduce a tiered approach for all IRT associated providers. This system classifies providers into different tiers based on your level of interaction with residents or clients. If you are a Tier 1 or Tier 2 associated provider, you are eligible to receive a free influenza vaccination. For more details, please refer to *IRT's Employee Vaccination Policy*.

### **Who can I contact if I have questions?**

If you have any questions, please speak to your Manager or GP. You can also email any questions to [vaccinations@irt.org.au](mailto:vaccinations@irt.org.au).