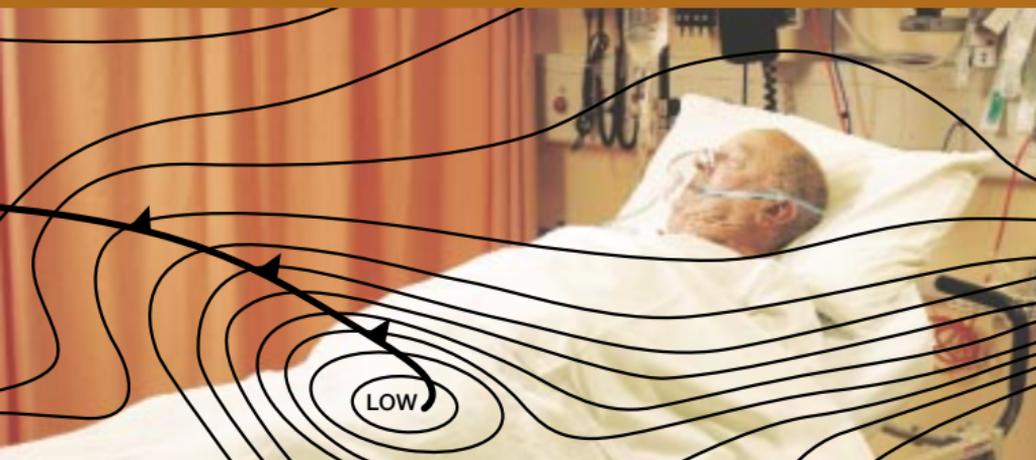


How to avoid being laid low this winter.



During winter we are all more susceptible to illness, in particular the flu. If you are in a high risk group it's especially important to get your flu vaccination now, providing you with the best protection against the flu.

Q: Am I in a high risk group?

A: If you are 65 or over, or suffer from a chronic illness such as a heart or lung condition, diabetes, asthma, cancer or you are a heavy smoker, your immune system may be weaker. That means you are more susceptible to the flu and complications resulting from the flu.

Q: How effective is the flu vaccination?

A: Very. In the high risk group, the vaccine is 80% effective in preventing death and 50% effective in preventing hospitalisation from the flu. Remember – to keep up to date with new strains of the virus, you need a new flu vaccination before each winter.

Q: Can I catch the flu from the vaccination?

A: No. The flu vaccination cannot give you the flu. Symptoms such as fever and headache occur after about 1% of vaccinations, but this is not the flu itself. These side effects are minor compared to the risk of hospitalisation, or even death, from the flu.

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Q: How much will the vaccine cost?

A: If you are 65 or over, your flu vaccine is free. This also applies to Indigenous Australians aged 50 or over, plus Indigenous Australians aged 15-49 with a high-risk medical condition. Subsidised flu vaccine is available through the Pharmaceutical Benefit Scheme for people with high risk medical conditions.

Q: Are there any other vaccinations I should have?

A: Yes. People who are at high risk for flu complications should also be vaccinated against pneumococcal disease, a common cause of pneumonia. Usually, only two pneumococcal vaccinations, 5 years apart, are required.

More ways to avoid the winter lows.

- **See your GP early**

Don't wait until you start to feel really unwell. At the first sign of winter illness, see your GP.

- **Keep in regular contact with family & friends**

If you feel unwell or need help getting to your doctor, call on them for support.

- **Check your medication**

Always follow the prescribed dosage. Just as important, check you have adequate repeats of your medication.

- **Call Health Direct anytime**

If you need medical help after hours, you can call Health Direct on **1800 022 222** any time, day or night, for free and confidential advice from a registered nurse. (TTY: 1800 022 226)

- **Keep this information card handy**

Even if you have followed all the steps, it is a good idea to keep this information card in a handy place such as on your fridge or next to your phone.