Protecting Your Health: Why Vaccines Matter More As We Age

Flu and COVID-19 viruses change over time, and our immune system is not as strong when we are older.

RSV can also lead to serious respiratory illness and hospitalisation in older people, particularly during the winter months.

Staying up to date with vaccinations helps maintain protection against severe illness.

There are a range of free vaccines for most older adults:

1

Influenza (flu) vaccine

Free for people 65 years of age and over

Recommended every year

2

COVID-19 vaccine

Recommended every year for those aged 65-74 years of age

Recommended every 6 months for those 75 years of age and over

3

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccine

Free for people 75 years of age and over

Free for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over 60 years of age and over

Vaccination helps to:



- Reduce severe illness
- Reduce hospitalisation
- Lower risk of complications and death
- Protect other residents and staff
- Reduce the likelihood of outbreaks

Reasons to get vaccinated



- Stay well
- Maintain your independence
- Reduce your risk of complications
- Avoid hospitalisation
- Protect your family and community

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Commonly Asked Questions

How do vaccines work?
Vaccines help your immune system recognise and fight infections. They train your body to respond quickly by either preventing illness or reducing the severity. Vaccines work by 'teaching' your immune system to make antibodies that can defend your body against the disease, without causing the disease itself.

Do the vaccines contain the live virus?
Most vaccines do not contain live virus. The COVID-19, RSV, and standard flu injections are not live vaccines and cannot give you the illness. The nasal spray flu vaccine contains a weakened (live attenuated) virus that does not cause disease in healthy people but helps build protection.

Will the vaccine make me sick?
Some people may experience mild side effects such as a sore arm at the injection site, tiredness, or mild fever. These symptoms usually go away within 1-2 days. Serious side effects are very rare.

How is the safety of vaccines monitored?
The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) assesses the quality of every batch of vaccine before it is distributed in Australia. It also collects, analyses, and reports data on vaccine side effects.

Why do I still need the vaccine if I've had the flu, RSV, or COVID-19 before?
Immunity from infection decreases over time, and viruses change. Vaccination helps maintain protection.

Can I have more than one vaccine at the same time?
Yes, and this is recommended. You can safely receive vaccines such as flu, RSV, pneumococcal, and shingles vaccines at the same time.

Our goal is to keep residents safe and well.

If you have questions, please speak with facility staff or your healthcare provider.

For more information visit our website:
www.bendigohealth.org.au/LMPHU

Or the Better Health Channel:
www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

Or speak with a healthcare provider

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