



April 3, 2018–NZ Kidney Foundation

## Flu tough on people with kidney conditions – get immunised

If you have a chronic kidney condition you may be eligible for a free flu shot from your doctor or nurse. Immunisation is especially important for people with kidney conditions as they are at a higher risk of complications when they get flu.

Free flu shots are available for adults and children six months and older between April and December 31 each year. However, autumn is the best time to get your annual flu shot so you're protected before flu season strikes.

To better match circulating viruses, the two funded flu vaccines will contain four inactivated virus strains, specially formulated for the New Zealand 2018 season.

This year's vaccines are expected to offer better protection against the strain circulating in the Northern Hemisphere winter this season, and sometimes called the 'Aussie flu', that's been in the media lately.

Flu can be anywhere, so you can easily catch it. Even if your kidney condition is well managed, being fit will not always protect you from flu.

Influenza is not the same as a cold. It's a serious disease that can also make other existing conditions, such as kidney disease, even worse.

Research shows that you can infect others with the flu virus even when you're not showing symptoms yourself. So, if you're caring for someone with a kidney condition, you can help avoid passing the virus on to them by being immunised.

Please note, flu immunisation from your practice nurse or doctor is free for people with kidney conditions. If, however, you have a consultation or check-up with your doctor at the same time, a consultation fee may apply.

The influenza vaccine is a prescription medicine. Talk to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist about the benefits and possible risks. And, if you're between 65 and 80 years old, ask if you're also eligible for free [shingles immunisation](#).

Check out [www.fightflu.co.nz](http://www.fightflu.co.nz) to find out whether you qualify for free flu immunisation or call 0800 IMMUNE 0800 466 863.

Ends

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