

Winter is coming and so is flu season

Sniffles, sore throats and throbbing headaches - winter is coming, and unfortunately, so is the flu season.

The good news is that prevention is better than cure and MediRite pharmacies, conveniently located in selected Shoprite and Checkers supermarkets across South Africa, have stocked up on vaccines ahead of the flu season.

Annual vaccinations can reduce your chances of getting the flu, or at least the severity of symptoms if you do catch it, so get yours now at any of the almost 150 MediRite Pharmacies countrywide for R69.99.

Dr Darren Green answers five frequently asked questions regarding the flu vaccine:

1. When should I be vaccinated?

The best time to be vaccinated is in Autumn (between April and May), before the flu season starts as the vaccination usually takes up to two weeks to be effective.

2. Who should be vaccinated?

Flu vaccination is recommended for:

- people aged 65 years and older
- children aged between 6 months and 5 years
- children aged between 6 months and 18 years on long-term aspirin therapy
- pregnant women (during all stages of pregnancy)
- people with serious medical conditions (such as heart, lung or kidney disease)
- those living in nursing homes, chronic care or rehabilitation centres
- healthcare or social workers directly involved in patient care

3. Are there any side effects?

Like any medication, the flu vaccination can have side effects. These include:

- pain, redness and swelling where the vaccine was injected
- headache or muscle ache
- drowsiness or tiredness
- feeling unwell

4. How effective is the flu vaccine?

No vaccine is 100% effective, but the flu vaccination is the best defense available against the flu.

5. Do I need to get the vaccine every year?

It is recommended that you get vaccinated against the flu every year as the viruses that cause it are always changing. Each year's vaccine is made to protect against the viruses that are likely to cause flu that specific year and may differ from the previous season.

ENDS