

Medirite among the first to launch flu vaccine ahead of winter

(30 March 2021) Medirite is among the first pharmacies in South Africa to offer the 2021 flu vaccine, retailing from just R109, ahead of the upcoming winter season.

The seasonal flu vaccine available from Medirite, the chain of pharmacies conveniently located inside Shoprite and Checkers supermarkets, protects against four strains of flu.

Although the vaccine will not protect against Covid-19, it will play an important role during the pandemic, says Lisa Giltrow, Senior Pharmacist at Medirite.

“The flu vaccine won’t make you more resilient to Covid-19. It may however make diagnosis of a Covid-19 infection easier. As the typical viral infection symptoms are largely similar in both the flu and a Coronavirus infection, presentation of these symptoms could mask a Covid-19 infection and result in a missed diagnosis. By having the flu vaccine and thus reducing the risk of contracting flu, it could rule out flu as a possible diagnosis and the person being tested for Covid-19 rather than writing it off as a ‘case of the flu’,” explains Giltrow.

Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent infection and severe outcomes caused by influenza viruses, advises Giltrow, and the flu vaccine reduces the number of flu-related doctor’s visits and hospitalisations each year.

“Vaccination is especially important for people at higher risk of serious influenza complications, and for people who live with or care for high risk individuals. The flu vaccine also protects both mother and child when administered during pregnancy - passive protection of the infant occurs from birth to less than 6 months of age following vaccination of pregnant women,” says Giltrow.

Although anyone can obtain the vaccine, during the Covid-19 pandemic the World Health Organisation (WHO) has [specifically recommended](#) seasonal influenza vaccinations for health workers, older adults, pregnant women, individuals with specific chronic medical conditions, and children aged 6-59 months.

Those who’ve previously had flu vaccinations should also return for their shots this year, as the new vaccines contain protection against the latest strains detected for the 2021 season, says Giltrow.

The results are highly effective, and although no vaccine can offer 100% protection, they can reduce the severity of illness in people who may still contract it.

“The flu vaccine stimulates your body’s natural defence system to produce antibodies. This occurs within two to three weeks after vaccination. These antibodies neutralise the flu viruses when the body is later exposed to them,” explains Giltrow.

Medirite is offering the flu vaccine at its 146 pharmacies located across South Africa. It retails from just R109 - and the pharmacy accepts all major medical aids. To book, call your preferred [Medirite](#) to make an appointment.