



YOUR BANKMED NEWSLETTER

JUST FOR YOU THIS MONTH

FIVE GOOD REASONS TO GET YOUR FLU VACCINE THIS YEAR

As we head into flu season, getting a flu shot becomes important, to protect ourselves and our loved ones from severe flu-related infections and complications. This is true for even the fittest and healthiest among us.

Flu (influenza) is caused by a virus **which spreads through respiratory droplets** released by the body when we breathe out – when we talk, cough or sneeze. Depending on an individual's health status or underlying risk profile, some people can get very sick from the flu virus.

Here are five good reasons to get your flu vaccination this year.

1. The flu vaccine will help to **lower your risk of becoming sick with flu.**
2. Although the flu vaccine doesn't offer complete protection against getting the flu, it does lower your chances of getting the infection. And, if you do get flu, you'll **recover faster.** This means **you're not infectious for as long,** which helps **limit the spread of infection to others.**
3. **If you're at a high risk of developing a serious influenza illness** – like bronchitis and pneumonia – this vaccine is even more important.

4. If you live with a person who is at risk, your vaccine is also crucial.
5. It is still the most effective way to protect you against flu infection and its complications.

Flu vaccines stimulate the production of antibodies in the body about two weeks after you get the vaccination. These antibodies protect against infection and serious illness. We have access to new flu vaccines every year because flu viruses change quickly. The vaccines are made to match new seasonal flu variants as closely as possible.





FLU VACCINES ARE HIGHLY RECOMMENDED FOR PEOPLE MOST AT RISK OF SERIOUS FLU, INCLUDING:

01. Children aged six months to five years.
02. People aged 65 or over.
03. People with HIV.
04. People who are pregnant or postpartum (usually, the first six weeks after childbirth) – the flu vaccine is safe to have while breastfeeding.
05. People living in care facilities (old-age homes, or chronic care and rehabilitation institutions).
06. People who have a chronic health condition (e.g. asthma, heart or kidney disease and diabetes).
07. People who have a weakened immune system.

GETTING THE FLU VACCINATION CANNOT GIVE YOU THE FLU.

The flu vaccine cannot cause the flu because it does not contain a live virus. It simply allows your body to develop the antibodies to protect you against serious flu infection. Flu vaccines are safe and well tolerated. In some people, they might cause pain or redness and swelling at the injection site, or a headache, fever, or muscle or joint aches. These clear up within a day or so and are just a sign that your immune system has been stimulated.

Bear in mind it takes about two weeks after your flu jab to develop antibodies to the flu. Some people get sick after their vaccination, but it's not the vaccine that caused this. It's more likely that they were exposed to the flu virus before or during the two weeks needed to develop antibodies.

WHO SHOULD NOT GET A FLU VACCINE?

Children younger than six months of age and people with severe, life-threatening allergies to any ingredient in a flu vaccine (other than egg proteins).

HOW DO MY SCHEME BENEFITS COVER MY FLU SHOT?

Bankmed pays for **one seasonal flu vaccine per member, per year.**

To get the full benefits of the flu vaccine, you should get vaccinated before the start of the flu season which, on average, is the first week of June. Ideally, you should get vaccinated as soon as the 2024 flu vaccine becomes available, which is usually towards the end of March or early April. It's good to get vaccinated early every year to make sure you're protected against the latest strains of the flu virus.

There's no reason not to get your flu vaccine this year, so we encourage you to **book your flu vaccine today.**





NO DATA? NO PROBLEM.

While we may have extensive mobile network coverage and just about everyone owns a smartphone, internet access in South Africa remains at around just 68.2% of the total population. The primary reason for this discrepancy is the affordability of mobile data. For many people access to essential online offerings such as education, employment, and health services is out of their reach due to high data costs.

Access to information is a fundamental right and helps ensure transparency. It's no secret digital communication is the way of the future and is certainly the preferred medium of communication for millennials.

Bankmed is on a journey to be as inclusive as possible for all our members and as such, have made multiple entry points to information, data-free for our members. This creates an opportunity for members to gain access to our extensive Bankmed digital world – no airtime or data balance is needed to get the information you want!

Below are just a few data-free entry points for valuable Bankmed information and services that may be of benefit to you:

- *e-Pharm*
- *Health Screenings*
- *2024 AGM*



YOUR MONTHLY HOW-TO TIP

Have you downloaded your digital membership card yet? Ditch the plastic, lighten the load in your wallet and make sure you have your Bankmed card wherever you are!

01. Make sure you have the Bankmed App – you can download it from the **App Store** or **Google Play Store**.
02. Log into the App using your Bankmed website log-in details.
03. Locate your digital card by tapping the *More* button on the bottom right corner, then *Manage*, then *Digital Cards*.
04. Download your card into your Apple Wallet or Google Wallet.

You can also save a screenshot of your card if you struggle to download a digital version.



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