



Arthritis NZ
Mateponapona
Aotearoa

Living well with arthritis

Flu and arthritis

Help protect yourself this flu season

Influenza (flu) can affect anyone, but some people living with arthritis may have a higher risk of becoming more unwell from flu. This can include people living with inflammatory or autoimmune arthritis, or those taking medicines that suppress the immune system.

Getting your annual flu vaccine is one of the best ways to help protect yourself from flu and reduce the chance of becoming seriously unwell.



If you haven't had your flu vaccine yet, it's not too late.

Flu is 'seasonal,' but people can still catch it throughout Spring. For this reason, flu vaccines are funded until the end of December. Only one vaccine is funded per person per flu season.



You may be eligible for a free flu vaccine

In Aotearoa New Zealand, the flu vaccine is funded for many people who have health conditions that increase their risk from flu.

Some medicines used to manage arthritis can suppress your immune system, which means your body may not fight infections as easily.

These can include:

- methotrexate
- leflunomide
- azathioprine
- biologic medicines
- prednisone and some other corticosteroids

If you're unsure whether you're eligible for a funded flu vaccine, talk to your GP, nurse, hauora provider or pharmacist.

Help protect your whānau

Encouraging the people you live with to get their flu vaccination can also help reduce the chance of flu spreading through your household.

Getting vaccinated

You can arrange your flu vaccination through your GP, hauora provider or participating pharmacy.

Don't stop or change your arthritis medicines before vaccination

unless your healthcare professional advises you to.

This is general advice only. For personal medical advice please talk to your health professional who understands your personal medical history and current medications. Reviewed by our registered pharmacist Linda Caddick.



Need support with your arthritis?

Arthritis Assist offers free, personalised support to help you understand and manage your arthritis and live well.



0800 663 463



arthritis.org.nz