

Media Release

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GIVING VICTORIANS EASIER ACCESS TO LIFE-SAVING VACCINES

While the state fights to slow the spread of coronavirus, Victorians need to protect themselves against other preventable illnesses that can place a burden on our health system heading into the winter months.

The Andrews Labor Government is making it easier and more convenient for Victorians to get their annual flu shot and other important immunisations through their local pharmacy.

From 1 April, Victorian pharmacists can administer approved vaccinations outside of their normal location – through the mobile and outreach services of a hospital, pharmacy or pharmacy depot, increasing access to immunisations for all Victorians.

It is also easier for younger Victorians to get these lifesaving immunisations from their local pharmacy. Appropriately trained pharmacists can now administer the flu shot to children 10 years of age and older.

Pharmacists will also be able to administer the measles-mumps-rubella, meningococcal ACWY and whooping cough-containing vaccines to people 15 years of age and older – protecting young people from deadly diseases that, combined with the threat of coronavirus, could overwhelm the state's hospitals.

With 87 per cent of Victorians residing within 2.5 km of a pharmacist, a trip to the local pharmacy is often more convenient than a trip to the GP.

Attending a pharmacy or a GP to get a flu shot is a valid reason to leave the house under the Chief Health Officer's Stage Three directions, providing social distancing is practiced wherever possible.

Getting a flu shot is more important than ever this year to keep healthy and reduce the pressure on our health services. Immunisations save lives, and it's vital that all Victorians can access vaccination services close to home.

Since last flu season, Victoria has more pharmacists trained to provide immunisations and more locations to provide these services in, making it more convenient than ever before.

Pharmacists have been provided with advice by the department about physical distancing, hygiene and infection control in the context of the coronavirus pandemic.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Jenny Mikakos

"Victorians are rightly concerned about coronavirus – but we should not forget the flu, which is another highly contagious virus with the potential to cause serious illness or death."

"We're reducing the burden on our health system by making it easier for the whole family to go to the pharmacist and receive their flu shot this winter."

"By getting more health professionals involved in our fight against this year's flu season, more of our doctors and nurses can focus on other health conditions."