

Chief Pharmacist at TerryWhite Chemmart urges vaccination as flu cases emerge and vaccinations decline

- The National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System (NNDSS) has already reported 32,869 cases of influenza in 2025, indicating an early onset of the virus this year.
- TerryWhite Chemmart Pharmacies across the country will have flu vaccinations available for walk-ins and bookings from today.
- Australia recorded the highest number of influenza cases ever in 2024 as reported by the [CSIRO](#), and vaccination rates continued to decline.

Sydney, Wednesday 12 March 2025 – Chief Pharmacist at TerryWhite Chemmart, Brenton Hart, is urging Australians to get vaccinated early and ‘March against the flu’, in response to a significant decline in flu vaccinations in 2024.

Data from the [Australian Government’s Department of Health and Aged Care](#) highlights a worrying trend, with over half a million fewer Australians receiving the influenza vaccine in the past two years.

This comes as cases of influenza reached record breaking heights in Australia in 2024, with the [National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System](#) (NNDSS) recording 364,894 confirmed cases; a stark increase from 288,956 cases in 2023 and 234,581 cases in 2022. Further, the [National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance](#) reveals that just 25.7% of children between 6 months and 5 years received the vaccine in 2024, down from 44.6% in 2020, despite this age group being among the most at-risk of developing serious complications from the flu.

Data from the [Immunisation Coalition](#) also reveals that cases of influenza are hitting Australians as early as March, with 30,489 cases confirmed in March 2024, up from 18,582 cases in March 2023. As of today, the [NNDSS](#) had already reported 32,869 cases for 2025, indicating an early onset of the virus this year. If the trends from 2024 continue, with declining vaccination rates and an increasing number of confirmed influenza cases, healthcare providers could face a challenging flu season.

Even healthy individuals can contract the flu, making early vaccination crucial. A recent study conducted by Dentsu revealed that many people who forgo the influenza vaccine believe a strong immune system is sufficient protection. However, even healthy individuals can contract the flu, making early vaccination crucial.

Brenton Hart, Chief Pharmacist at TerryWhite Chemmart, said: “Each flu season brings its own challenges. If we experience another year of record flu case numbers and decreasing vaccination rates, it could have a big impact on our healthcare system and lead to other health issues in our communities. Everyone has a part to play in maintaining community health.

The key to prevention is timely vaccination before the onset of the season, and if you're feeling unwell, it's important to stay home. Your local pharmacist or GP is available to answer any questions you have and provide the latest vaccinations to ensure the best protection for you and your loved ones.”

Catherine Hughes, Founding Director of The Immunisation Foundation of Australia, said:

“While influenza is sometimes mild, it can also be really serious, leading to hospitalisations, long-term health issues, and even death. Young children often introduce the flu into the home, with schools and child-care centres being breeding grounds for bugs like influenza.”

“This can result in the whole family becoming unwell, leading to time off work, time off school, and disruptions to already busy schedules. That’s why it’s important for people to get vaccinated early and consider getting the whole family vaccinated to limit the spread of the virus and help prevent complications.”

As a highly infectious disease, the flu not only impacts families, communities and vulnerable individuals, but also has a huge impact on Australian businesses. In fact, [The Australian Vaccine Services](#) predicted that sick leave due to influenza cost employers between \$454,000,000 and \$757,000,000 in 2024, another consideration for businesses amidst a challenging economic landscape in 2025.

TerryWhite Chemmart has over 600 pharmacies nationwide, offering pre-booked and walk-in appointments with fully trained pharmacists, and many pharmacies are opened outside standard business hours and on the weekend.

Mr Hart again urged the importance of vaccination, “The flu doesn’t wait, and neither should you. Every Australian aged 6 months and older is recommended to receive a flu vaccine, and now is the time to get protected.”

“Vaccination is the best defence against severe illness, and by getting vaccinated, you’re helping to protect not just yourself, but also your loved ones and the wider community. Visit your local pharmacy or GP today and take the first step in staying flu-safe this season,” he continued.

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