

## Basic infection control

Good personal hygiene is one of the best ways to protect yourself from infectious diseases such as COVID-19, colds, and flu.

Making sure you clean your body daily, brushing your teeth morning and night, and covering your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing are all part of basic infection control.

Maintaining good personal hygiene will also help prevent you from spreading diseases to other people.

The easiest and cheapest way to control the spread of infectious diseases is thorough hand washing with warm, soapy water.

An alcohol-based hand sanitiser is a good way to clean your hands if you don't have access to soap and water but is only effective if your hands have no visible dirt on them.



Be ready this winter

## Local Information

### Patientinfo

Patientinfo is your local health information portal. The information is curated by local health professionals, reliable, locally relevant and up-to-date.

- Visit [www.patientinfo.org.au](http://www.patientinfo.org.au) for information specific to the **Hunter New England**.
- Visit [www.ccpatientinfo.org.au](http://www.ccpatientinfo.org.au) for information specific to the **Central Coast**.



## National Information

### HealthDirect

Health Direct Australia is the national online public health information service.

- Visit [www.healthdirect.gov.au](http://www.healthdirect.gov.au)

## Primary Health Network

The Primary Health Network (PHN) is a not for profit organisation funded by the Commonwealth government to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the primary health care system. The PHN is not a direct provider of services, instead we work with health care providers across the Hunter, New England & Central Coast.

- Visit [www.thephn.com.au/winter](http://www.thephn.com.au/winter) for more information, resources, and links to where you can get help this winter.



Supported by Hunter New England and Central Coast Local Health Districts



Winter is Coming

# ARE YOU READY?

BE PREPARED

BE ARMED

BE YOUR OWN CHAMPION



It is predicted to be a challenging winter with a combination of COVID and respiratory conditions – particularly influenza.

This winter we encourage you to do three things.

### First, BE PREPARED:

There are many things you can do to significantly reduce your risk of becoming ill.

When you're healthy and have a strong immune system, your body does a better job at fighting off viruses. To improve your immune system, you should:

- Eat well
- Take vitamins
- Sleep well
- Reduce or manage stress
- Quit smoking
- Limit alcohol

#### Create your own Winter-ready toolkit

Take time while you're healthy to stock your medicine cabinet. Get rid of expired medicines and make a list of what you need to replace and replenish. Because the flu can come on suddenly it's a good idea to have the following:

- Tissues, hand sanitiser and anti-bacterial soap
- Over the counter paracetamol and ibuprofen to help ease muscle aches and pains
- Cold and flu medications (consult your pharmacist to see if these products are suitable for you)
- An up-to-date list of all prescription medications you are taking
- Nasal sprays to help with congestion
- Throat lozenges to soothe the throat
- Ingredients to make soothing drinks, such as lemon, honey, and ginger.



BE PREPARED • BE ARMED • BE YOUR OWN CHAMPION



### Second, BE ARMED:

This year it is even more important to get vaccinated.

During the COVID-19 pandemic there has been reduced circulation of influenza virus and lower levels of influenza vaccine coverage compared to previous years.

With international borders reopening a possible resurgence of influenza is expected. Vaccination is the most effective measure protecting us from contracting infectious diseases.

The influenza vaccine and COVID-19 vaccines can be safely administered at the same time.

The best way to protect yourself against getting both infections is to make sure you've had your influenza vaccine and are fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

If you are not eligible for a free vaccine, you can also purchase an influenza vaccine.

Speak to your GP, Pharmacist, or other immunisation provider for more information.



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- Central Coast - [www.ccpatientinfo.org.au](http://www.ccpatientinfo.org.au)

### Third, BE YOUR OWN CHAMPION:

You can be your own champion this winter season by knowing where to go if you find yourself in need of medical help and remembering to follow the basics to protect yourself from infectious diseases.

#### Know where to go if you need help

In an emergency phone 000 immediately for an ambulance or visit the closest hospital Emergency Department.

The hospital emergency department is for major, life-threatening illnesses and injuries.

There are other places you can go for help if your simply feeling unwell, or have a minor injury or illness?

1. *Call your GP* – after hours care may be available through your normal general practitioner
2. Visit [www.healthdirect.gov.au](http://www.healthdirect.gov.au) and use the *HealthDirect Health Service Directory* to find an alternate GP
3. Use the *HealthDirect online Symptom Checker* to find out if you need to seek medical help
4. Call the 24 hour *HealthDirect hotline* for health advice on 1800 022 222
5. *Speak to a pharmacist* – for local pharmacy opening hours, go to [www.findapharmacy.com.au](http://www.findapharmacy.com.au)

**Visit Patientinfo for after hours medical care specific to your area.**

Patientinfo is a culturally appropriate resource for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

It does not replace care provided by doctors and other health professionals. See your doctor or other health professional if you are concerned about your health.