

MEDIA RELEASE

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Stay healthy this flu season – not too late to get immunised

Tasmanians are being encouraged to get their seasonal influenza vaccination from their local general practice before the winter chill sets in.

General Practice Tasmania immunisation spokesperson Dr Leanne Jones said the flu vaccinations were the best protection against flu.

“Even if you had your flu vaccine last year, you still need to be boosted again this year to maintain your immunity. The influenza vaccine provides protection for about a year,” Dr Jones said.

Every year different strains of influenza cause pain, fever, headaches and discomfort to thousands of Australians. Influenza is responsible for many deaths and a large number of admissions to hospital each year in Australia.

“While we can’t protect against all strains of influenza, the seasonal flu vaccine protects against the three main circulating strains. The 2011 vaccine includes the Pandemic (H1N1/swine flu) as this has been the main circulating strain during the 2010-11 Northern Hemisphere influenza season.

“We do know that many cases of flu will be prevented through vaccination, especially if people get their vaccination before winter starts,” Dr Jones said.

“Influenza vaccination is available free for people who are at severe risk of complications from influenza,” said Dr Jones. In fact, all people aged six months and over with medical conditions such as severe asthma, heart conditions and impaired immunity, that put them at a high risk of complications from influenza are eligible for free vaccine and should visit their general practice to discuss the influenza vaccination. All people 65 years of age or older, all Aboriginal Australians aged 15 years of age or older and pregnant women are also eligible.”

For those not eligible for the free vaccine, Dr Jones urges people to consider the costs of time off from work, and the impact on your lifestyle and family if you are unlucky enough to get the flu, and to discuss the purchase of this vaccine with your GP.

For more information on seasonal influenza vaccination talk to your GP or visit www.fightflu.gov.au/questions or <http://www.isg.org.au/>.

End Media Release

The General Practice Tasmania network is a unique statewide infrastructure that supports contemporary general practice in Tasmania by linking GPs with each other, by supporting all members of the general practice team and, increasingly, by employing or supporting allied health professionals such as physiotherapists, dieticians and psychologists to be part of the primary care team. General Practice Tasmania is also a proud member of the Australian General Practice Network.

