

INFLUENZA VACCINATION - 2019

Influenza seasons and severity are unpredictable. However, what we do know is that vaccination is the most important measure we have to prevent influenza and its complications. Annual vaccination is recommended for anyone 6 months of age and older. It is important to get a flu shot every year, as the virus changes each year. In addition, we know that the protection provided by the previous year's vaccine diminishes over time.

Vaccinations take 2-3 weeks to work fully. We recommend you receive your flu vaccination in early June as peak season in Perth is in August-September although there is always some background flu and we are now seeing a small mini peak of flu in February. The benefit of the vaccine starts to wane after about 4 months. The initial success of the vaccine diminishes the older you are and so for standard vaccine in those >60 year olds is approximately 50%.

VACCINES AVAILABLE IN 2019

Some vaccines are provided free by the Australian Government to a select subset of the population (65 years & over, pregnant women, those with chronic conditions and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People). However further complicating matters is that not all vaccines are on the Govt. free list. Most vaccines can be obtained from pharmacies for a relatively small fee.

Five free vaccines will be available in 2019:

- FluQuadri™ Junior for all children aged 6-35 months SANOFI
- Fluarix Tetra® for eligible people aged 6 months to 64years GSK
- FluQuadri™ for eligible people aged 3 years to 64years SANOFI
- Afluria Quad® for eligible people aged 5 years to 64 years SEQIRUS (Trivalent 3 strains)
- Fluad® for all people aged 65 years and over SEQIRUS (Trivalent 3 strains)

Vaccines not on the free list in 2019:

- Mylan (influvac Tetra).
- Fluzone (Sanofi).

For more information about the influenza vaccine you can visit www.health.gov.au/immunisation
Or call 1800 671 811 from 8am to 5pm Australian Eastern Standard Time.