

# Flu Vaccination Fact Sheet

## **What is the Flu, or Influenza?**

The Flu is a viral illness producing symptoms including feverishness, chills, headache, coughing, sneezing and nasal discharge. The Flu is significantly different to, and more serious than, the common cold. The virus puts otherwise healthy people in bed for days, and full recovery can take weeks. According to the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), "in most years, minor or major epidemics of influenza occur, usually during winter months."

## **How does it spread?**

The flu spreads from person to person by virus-carrying droplets sprayed into the air by coughing or sneezing.

## **What are the benefits of Flu vaccination?**

Vaccination provides a very high level of coverage from Influenza, and reduces the risk of secondary infection of fellow workers and family members. By being vaccinated, you greatly reduce the risk of going through the pain and inconvenience suffered through the virus.

## **What is the vaccine and how does it work?**

The vaccine contains killed flu virus

cells, which promote an immune response in the receiver, which in turn resists infection when the person is exposed to the live virus in everyday life.

The vaccine is administered in a small, pre-filled syringe via injection into the shoulder/upper arm area.

## **Can the vaccine give me the flu?**

No. The influenza vaccine is composed of killed virus particles. These cannot cause the flu. Between 5-10% of vaccinated people can develop a noticeable immune response to the vaccine that resembles a common cold. This usually lasts a day or two and is not contagious or serious. In fact it means that your body is mounting an immune response and is learning to protect itself from the flu.

## **Is the flu vaccine safe?**

Yes. A large majority of people experience no side effects. The most common side effect is soreness and minor swelling at the injection site, which can last up to two days.

## **Who should receive the vaccination?**

Anyone! (see next column for exceptions) The NHMRC advises

that: "Influenza vaccine should be administered to any person who wishes to reduce the likelihood of becoming ill with influenza."

## **Can I receive the vaccine if I am pregnant or if I think I may be pregnant?**

Medivax require that you seek advice from your doctor in this situation. We need written consent from your doctor in order administer a vaccine.

## **Who should not receive the vaccination?**

- people who are allergic to eggs (chicken eggs are used in the production of the vaccine)
  - people who are allergic to neomycin (an antibiotic used in production of the flu vaccine), or any other component of the vaccine
  - people who have had a severe reaction to a previous flu vaccine
  - people suffering from severe fever.
- The presence of a minor illness with or without fever should not prevent vaccine administration.

Anyone who is unsure as to the suitability of vaccination should contact their doctor for advice.

For further information and queries, please contact Medivax at [mail@medivax.com.au](mailto:mail@medivax.com.au).

