

BUG BULLETIN

THE LATEST INFORMATION ABOUT HEALTH PROTECTION
IN WESTERN SYDNEY LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICT

THE BUG BULLETIN IS NOW AVAILABLE
AS A DIGITAL NEWSLETTER AND WILL NO
LONGER BE AVAILABLE IN HARDCOPY.

If you would like to subscribe to the mailing list, please email
WSLHD-CentreForPopulationHealth@health.nsw.gov.au

Immunisation



SEASONAL INFLUENZA VACCINATION 2018

What's new?

- A NSW Government influenza vaccination program for all children between 6 months and 5 years.
- Two new higher immunogenicity trivalent influenza vaccines (Fluad® and Fluzone® High-Dose) are available and funded on the National Immunisation Program for people aged ≥65 years. These vaccines are made to offer increased protection and this benefit is likely to compensate for any loss of protection against the additional strain in the quadrivalent vaccine.
- Six vaccine brands under the National Immunisation Program will be available for this flu season.

An information sheet detailing the vaccine brands and the age eligibility is available here:

www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/Documents/influenza-information-sheet.pdf

We recommend making this information available for GPs and nurses who prescribe or administer flu vaccines.

A page of stickers will be distributed with vaccine deliveries to be adhered to the vaccine baskets to help identify the correct vaccine.



There are multiple information resources for health professionals and the public available on NSW Immunisation Website.

We encourage you to visit on the link below:

www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/Pages/seasonal_flu_vaccination.aspx

The Australian Government Department of Health has also produced a number of resources for health professions and the public on influenza. These are available from: beta.health.gov.au/topics/immunisation

SCHOOL VACCINATION PROGRAM 2018 AND THE GARDASIL9® VACCINE

As many of you know the NSW school-based vaccination program offers the vaccines recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) for students in high school.

Vaccines being provided in the School Program in 2018 include:

- Year 7 students – 2 doses of Gardasil9®, 6 months between doses, and a single Boostrix vaccine.
- Year 10 & 11 students – a single dose of Menactra (Meningococcal ACWY).

Links for further information on the NSW Health Website:

www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/Pages/HPV-vaccination.aspx

www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/Pages/school_vaccination_language.aspx

Link for Gardasil9® resources from Australian Government Department of Health which include brochures, videos and provider factsheet:

beta.health.gov.au/news-and-events/news/preventing-human-papillomavirus-hpv-cancers-and-diseases-by-vaccination

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If you have any suggestions or stories to share please contact the ID team on
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Communicable Diseases



Warning signs of severe illness

Every winter influenza causes severe illness in a small number of people. Make sure your high risk patients are aware of the warning signs to look out for if they have an influenza-like illness and seek emergency medical care.

IN CHILDREN

- fast breathing or trouble breathing
- bluish skin colour
- not drinking enough fluids
- excessive drowsiness or significantly reduced activity level
- being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- development of a rash
- persistent vomiting

IN ADULTS

- difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- bluish skin colour
- pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- sudden dizziness
- confusion
- development of a rash
- persistent vomiting

- plenty of rest
- ensure adequate fluid intake
- eat healthy food
- wash hands regularly
- use disposable facial tissues and immediately throw used tissues in a bin
- minimise your contact with other people
- watch for the warning signs of severe illness and seek urgent medical attention if these occur.

MANAGING THE FLU THIS WINTER – ADVICE FOR YOUR PATIENTS

The influenza virus this winter will likely cause a mild illness in most, however in some individuals it will cause a severe illness. It is important that your patients at high risk of severe illness from influenza be vaccinated against influenza and to seek medical attention early if they develop symptoms.

What are the symptoms of influenza?

Influenza can produce fever, chills, cough, sore throat, tiredness, and muscle aches, and sometimes vomiting and diarrhoea. Severe cases of influenza can result in dyspnoea and pneumonia. Symptoms usually appear between two to four days after exposure.

People who are at an increased risk of severe illness this flu season

People considered to be at higher risk of severe illness from seasonal influenza strains include:

- Those with chronic respiratory conditions
- Pregnant women (especially 2nd and 3rd trimester)
- People with morbid obesity
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

- People who smoke
- People aged 65 years or older
- People with certain other chronic medical conditions such as:
 - Cardiac disease (excluding simple hypertension)
 - Diabetes mellitus
 - Chronic metabolic disease
 - Chronic renal or liver disease
 - Haemoglobinopathies
 - Immunosuppression (including cancers, HIV/AIDS, immunosuppressive drugs)
 - Chronic neurological conditions.

General advice for managing the flu

For your patients not at an increased risk of severe complications and who are mildly unwell, please advise them to remain at home until symptoms resolve.

Simple tips for your patient to manage their symptoms:

- paracetamol – to help reduce fever and muscle aches

Visit the NSW Health website Influenza page for more information and resources:
www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/Influenza/Pages/default.aspx