**INFORMATION ON INFLUENZA (FLU) VACCINATION 2024**

Influenza, or “the flu”, is an acute viral illness with sudden onset of symptoms including:

Fever; dry cough; nasal congestion; headache; sore throat; muscle aches; and fatigue. Unlike the common cold, people with influenza are usually in bed unwell for several days.

Complications of influenza include pneumonia, damage of the heart muscle, and neurological complications which can lead to hospitalisation and death.

**Annual influenza vaccination is recommended for everyone > 6 months of age.**

**It is the best way to prevent influenza and its complications.**

All influenza vaccines available in Australia in 2024 offer protection against 4 common strains of influenza that are likely to be the most common based on recent patterns of flu epidemics globally.

**The Australian 2024 egg-based influenza vaccines protect against the following strains**:

* A/Victoria/4897/2022(H1N1)pdm09-like virus
* A/Thailand/8/2022 (H3N2)-like virus
* B/Austria/1359417/2021 (B/Victoria lineage)-like virus
* B/Phuket/3073/2013 (B/Yamagata lineage)-like virus

Influenza vaccination is funded through the National Immunisation Program for the following groups:

* Children 6 months to <5 years
* All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 6 months and over
* Pregnant women at *any* stage of pregnancy and for *every* flu season they are pregnant
* People aged > 5yrs with medical conditions putting them at risk of severe influenza and its complications
* Adults > 65 - recommended to receive the *adjuvanted* influenza vaccine FLUAD.

Children <9 yrs are recommended to receive 2 doses in the first year of vaccination (4 weeks apart).

People who have recently had a haematopoietic stem cell transplant or solid organ transplant should receive 2 doses (4 weeks apart) in the first year after transplantation.

You should NOT be vaccinated today is you have had:

* Anaphylaxis (a severe allergic reaction) following a previous dose of any influenza vaccine
* Anaphylaxis due to any vaccine component within influenza vaccines

Vaccination should be deferred in acute illness with fever >38.5 degrees, until you are well.

Flu vaccines can be given on the same day as most other vaccines, including COVID vaccines (not available at EBMC). Due to limited data on the co-administration of FLUAD and Shingrix (which also contains an adjuvant) ATAGI recommends separating these 2 vaccines.

Flu vaccines are usually well tolerated. Pain and swelling at the injection site may occur. Uncommonly, fever, headache and muscle aches may develop within a couple of hours and last up to 2 days. These can be managed with rest, fluids and paracetamol.

Very rarely after immunisations an acute allergic reaction with hives, breathing problems and swelling of the face/lips/eyes (anaphylaxis) can occur that requires urgent medical attention.

**We ask all patients to wait on site for 15 minutes post vaccination for monitoring.**

While egg allergy is not a contraindication to egg-based flu vaccines, if there is significant concern patients can wait for a longer period of monitoring post vaccination (30 minutes).