

## **2018 Influenza Fact Sheet**

The seasonal Influenza Vaccination Program begins April 2018

### **Why get immunised against the flu?**

The flu (also called influenza) is a very contagious infection of the airways. It is especially serious for babies, people over 65 years old and pregnant women.

Vaccination is a safe and effective way to protect you from serious disease caused by the flu.

By getting vaccinated against the flu, you can also help protect other people, especially people who are too sick or too young to be vaccinated. The more people who are vaccinated in your community, the less likely the disease will spread.

### **Who should get immunised against the flu?**

Anyone who wants to protect themselves against the flu can talk to their doctor about getting immunised.

You should get a flu vaccine every year. This is because the most common strains of the virus that cause the flu change every year. The vaccine also changes every year to match these strains.

### **Do I need to pay for flu immunisation?**

Vaccines covered by the NIP are free for people who are eligible. See the NIP Schedule to find out which vaccines you or your family are eligible to receive.

Eligible people get the vaccine for free, but your health care provider (for example, your doctor) may charge a consultation fee for the visit. You can check this when you make your appointment.

If you are not eligible for free vaccine, you may need to pay for it. The cost depends on the type of vaccine, the formula and where you buy it from. Your immunisation provider can give you more information.

### **What are the possible side effects of flu immunisation?**

All medicines and vaccines can have side effects. Sometimes they are serious, most of the time they're not.

For most people, the chance of having a serious side effect from a vaccine is much lower than the chance of serious harm if you caught the disease.

Talk to your doctor about possible side effects of the flu vaccines, or if you or your child have possible side effects that worry you.

Common side effects of flu vaccines include:

- pain, redness, swelling or hardness where the needle went in
- fever, tiredness, body aches occur infrequently within a few hours of vaccination and may last 1-2 days