



Flu season is coming – will you be prepared?



Flu vaccinations will be available from early April

Healthcare experts recommend flu vaccinations as the best way to defend yourself against the disease, which has left many people sick and caused deaths overseas.

Influenza, “the flu”, can be anywhere. It is easy to catch through coughs and sneezes. The flu is much worse than a cold, and many people won’t even show symptoms, so they can spread the disease without even knowing it.

Immunisation is the most effective tool available to reduce the impact of the flu.

People at risk of getting very sick when they have the flu include young children, babies, pregnant women and older people, as well as people with some illnesses like asthma or diabetes. Some people with the flu need to stay in hospital for a while, and a few people will even die from it.

The best way to protect yourself, your family and people around you is by having a flu shot every year.

This year the vaccination has been updated to include the strain which is currently causing problems in the Northern Hemisphere.

The funded quadrivalent influenza vaccines for 2018 are:

INFLUVAC® TETRA

For adults and children aged 3 years or older.

FLUARIX® TETRA

For children aged under 3 years, i.e. 6–35 months.

The funded vaccines will protect against the strain referred to as “Australian flu”, which circulated in the Southern Hemisphere last winter and more recently severely affected the Northern Hemisphere.

4 out of 5 people infected show no symptoms of the flu

The Southern Hemisphere Influenza and Vaccine Effectiveness, Research and Surveillance (SHIVERS) Serosurvey, in 2015, provided information about the immunity that people have against the flu.

The results showed that 26% of people were infected with the flu and 4 out of 5 of these people (80%) were asymptomatic carriers (people who show no signs of being sick). These carriers can spread the virus to everyone around them, without knowing it.

You are safe in their hands at Wairarapa Hospital

Wairarapa DHB is the handwashing leader, according to a recent publication of the Health, Quality & Safety Commission’s national hand hygiene results, where Wairarapa DHB came first in the country in hygiene compliance.

With a 92.5% compliance rate, Wairarapa DHB topped the table in the ‘5 moments of hand hygiene’, with other DHBs reporting compliance of 67.7% - 87.6%. The target is 80%.

Of particular note was the 95.1% compliance rate attributed to Wairarapa hospital’s Assessment, Treatment & Rehabilitation ward and 90% to the Medical-Surgical ward.

“It is great to see that the commitment our staff make towards improving the quality and safety of patient care is being recognised,” says Chris Stewart, Wairarapa DHB’s Executive Leader Quality, Risk and Innovation.

Kiwis encouraged to think about end-of-life care

Kiwis are being encouraged to think about, talk about and share what matters to them for their end-of-life care. An advance care plan can set out your wants and hopes for your end-of-life care based on:

- your personal views and values
- a better understanding of your current and likely future health
- the treatment and care options available to you.

Dr Barry Snow, advance care planning clinical spokesperson, says having an advance care plan is particularly important if you become too unwell to tell your loved ones and your health care team what you want yourself.

“Having an advance care plan will help you understand what is important to you and what treatment and care you would like.”



‘After completing my plan I felt a peace of mind and that now it was time to get on with living.’ Arthur Te Anini

Arthur Te Anini first heard about advance care planning at a ‘Better Breathing’ rehabilitation programme for his emphysema.

“I was getting worried because of my health and I thought if I keel over, the family will have to pick up the pieces and they won’t know what to do. I thought it was a great idea to create an advance care plan so they knew what I wished for myself.”

Advance care plans can be completed online at www.advancecareplanning.org.nz, or a plan template can be downloaded. There are also a number of free resources to help you think about and prepare your advance care plan.