

Press Release

20 March 2018

Flu season is coming – will you be prepared?

Flu vaccinations will be available in Wairarapa from early April. Healthcare experts recommend flu vaccinations as the best way to protect 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 flu need to stay in hospital for a while, and a few people can die from it.

The best way to protect yourself is by having a flu shot every year – for some people it’s even free. The flu shot helps your body protect itself from flu. You protect yourself, your family and people around you if you have a flu shot.

This year the vaccination has been updated to include the strain which is currently causing problems in the Northern Hemisphere. The two 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 following strains of influenza:

- A(H1N1): an A/Michigan/45/2015 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus
- A(H3N2): an A/Singapore/INFIMH-16-0019/2016 (H3N2)-like virus (new)
- B/Phuket/3073/2013-like virus (belonging to B/Yamagata lineage) (new)
- B/Brisbane/60/2008-like virus (belonging to B/Victoria lineage)

A/Singapore/INFIMH-16-0019/2016 is broadly matched to the strain referred to as “Australian flu”, which circulated in the Southern Hemisphere last winter and more recently severely affected the Northern Hemisphere.

For more information:

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