

SEASONAL INFLUENZA VACCINATION 2019

GENERAL PRACTITIONERS and
ABORIGINAL MEDICAL SERVICES



Please distribute to all doctors and staff in your practice

1. **Influenza activity remains unseasonably high across NSW.**
2. **NSW Health has commenced delivery of Government funded influenza vaccines to aged care facilities and will commence deliveries to GP practices next week.**
3. **Please prioritise vaccinating people 65 and over and pregnant women once supplies are received**

Situation update

- NSW has had unusually high influenza activity over the summer and it has remained high in March, with over 6400 cases notified so far this year.
- Since January 16 flu outbreaks in aged care facilities have been reported, including 10 associated deaths.
- Flu A strains predominate, both A/H1N1 and A/H3N2, but no novel flu strains have emerged.

Vaccine deliveries

- Because of the ongoing transmission of flu, NSW Health is making influenza vaccines available as soon as they are received into the State Vaccine Centre.
- Deliveries of Fluvad (for people 65 years and older) to aged care facilities has commenced.
- Next week deliveries of Fluvad and Afluria Quad or Fluarix Tetra will start to GPs and Aboriginal Medical Services. Please prioritise vaccination of pregnant women and people 65 years and over, **but do not schedule clinics until you have received the vaccines**, as deliveries to all NSW providers takes 2 to 3 weeks.
- We expect to start delivery of influenza vaccines for children aged 6 months to less than 5 years in mid-April, when those vaccines are received into the warehouse.
- If you have not placed a pre-order for influenza vaccine, please do so now online at: <https://nsw.tollhealthcare.com/>

Flu treatment

- Antiviral treatment (with Tamiflu or Relenza) is recommended as early as possible for people with flu symptoms aged over 65 years or otherwise at increased risk of influenza complications.
- Consider antiviral treatment for other patients with confirmed or suspected influenza if treatment can be started within 48 hours of onset.

Summer respiratory infection survey

- NSW Health will be conducting a brief survey of notified influenza and pertussis cases to improve understanding of respiratory infections over summer
- Surveys will be conducted online and invitations will be sent directly to patients who supplied a mobile phone number to the testing laboratory
- You may opt to have your patients excluded from being contacted by contacting us at MOH-CommunicableDiseases@health.nsw.gov.au

Further Information

- NSW Health Influenza website: www.health.nsw.gov.au/flu
- Contact your local Public Health Unit on **1300 066 055**

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vicky Sheppard'.

Dr Vicky Sheppard
Director, Communicable Diseases
29 March 2019