

## FAQS - Seasonal Influenza Vaccination for 2010

### **What is Influenza?**

Influenza is a contagious virus and is spread from person to person via droplets produced through sneezing, coughing or even talking.

In healthy adults, influenza is regarded as a moderately severe illness caused by a virus infecting many parts of the body resulting in: fever, cough, chills, sore throat, headache, muscle aches, runny nose, severe fatigue, and loss of appetite. Complications may cause pneumonia, worsening of other illnesses and even death.

### **Which vaccine is recommended in Australia for the 2010 'flu season'?**

The formulation of influenza vaccines for use in Australia is determined each year by the Australian Influenza Vaccine Committee (AIVC) based on information and recommendations from the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Following recommendations from the WHO and the AIVC, the influenza vaccine for the Australian 2010 influenza season contains the following three strains:

A (H1N1): an A/California/7/2009 (H1N1) – like strain,

A (H3N2): an A/Perth/16/2009 (H3N2) – like strain,

B: a B/Brisbane/60/2008 – like strain.

### **How often should I receive the vaccination?**

It is recommended that influenza vaccinations be given on an annual basis as viruses are continually changing.

### **When should I receive the vaccination?**

Influenza vaccinations are given during Autumn.

### **How long does it take to develop protection against influenza after receiving the vaccination?**

Protection develops about two weeks after being given and lasts up to a year.

### **Why should I receive the vaccination?**

In healthy working adults research has shown that influenza vaccination decreases the frequency of upper respiratory illness by 25%, decreases absenteeism from work due to upper respiratory illness by 43% and decreases absenteeism due to all illnesses by 36% when compared with healthy working adults who received a placebo.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Nichol, KL et al. The effectiveness of vaccination against influenza in healthy working adults. New England Journal of Medicine, 1995, 333; 889-93.

### **What are the side effects of the flu vaccine?**

Common side effects include:

- Pain, redness and swelling at the injection site
- Low grade temperature
- Muscle aches
- Drowsiness or tiredness
- A temporary small lump at the injection site

If mild reactions occur, they may last one to two days, resolving on their own.

Rare side effects include

- Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS)

The annual incidence of GBS in Australia is about 400 cases each year. Most cases are caused by a common gastro infection. Less than 5% have laboratory proven influenza infection.

Studies conducted since 1976 have not found an excess risk of GBS associated with influenza vaccines.

A history of GBS related to influenza vaccination would need to be discussed with your GP.

- Severe allergic reaction

All people receiving the influenza vaccination will need to complete a checklist prior to receiving the vaccination to screen for allergies and will also be required to wait 15 mins after being immunised to ensure no anaphylactic reaction occurs, however if other reactions are severe or persistent contact your GP or local hospital.

### **Who should not receive the vaccination?**

Those individuals who are allergic to egg protein, and some antibiotics cannot have the vaccine and individuals who are febrile on the day the immunisations are given are advised to wait until they are well.

All people wishing to receive the vaccination will be required to read and sign a consent form prior to the vaccine being administered.

### **Can the seasonal influenza vaccination be delivered at the same time as other vaccines?**

Yes, the annual seasonal influenza vaccine is often given at the same time as other routine vaccines.

### **Who will administer the vaccination?**

Nabenet Health employs registered and endorsed nurse immunisers who will deliver the vaccination on the worksite.

### **How long will it take?**

The vaccination is delivered in a matter of minutes, however it is a requirement that anyone receiving the vaccination remains within close proximity to the nurse immuniser for 15 minutes following the vaccination in case an anaphylactic reaction occurs.