

IMMUNISATION PROGRAM

Winter need not be a time for illness in your family. Get immunised and enjoy your winter: log fires, visits to the snow, waiting for the first wattle blossom to appear, hiking on Aboriginal land, cleaning up after the mutton bird season...There's so much to do, and getting your immunisations will make your winter so much more enjoyable. Call us on 1800 132 260.

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Immunisation Program



WANT TO MAKE THE MOST OF WINTER?

Want to avoid the worst infections that winter can bring?



It's your Aboriginal Health Service. Better health and wellbeing for the Aboriginal community in Tasmania.

It's that time of year when colds and influenza become more frequent. Some of us get over them quite quickly, and for others it seems to take forever.

The best prevention is looking after yourself:

- eating plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables
- getting some exercise
- not smoking
- getting your immunisations

How Will Immunisation Help Me?

Immunisations can help prevent serious chest infections such as bronchitis and pneumonia. There are two vaccines available which help prevent serious chest infections - flu vaccine and pneumococcal vaccine.

Should I Be Immunised?

Yes, if you are an Aboriginal person aged over 50. Or if you are an Aboriginal person of any age, who:

- smokes
- has diabetes, heart problems or lung diseases such as emphysema, asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- drinks alcohol to excess
- doesn't have a spleen
- is homeless

What If I Am Pregnant?

Flu vaccine is recommended for women planning a pregnancy, and for pregnant women who will be in the second or third trimester during the influenza season - including those in the first trimester at the time of vaccination. Pneumococcal vaccination is not recommended for pregnant women.

What's The Difference Between Flu Vaccine And Pneumococcal Vaccines?

Flu vaccine only works for one year, so people at risk need to have the injection at the beginning of each winter. It is available from March. It halves your chance of getting the flu, and even if you do get the flu it cuts down your chances of getting serious complications like pneumonia.

Pneumococcal vaccine is less well known, but apparently infection with the pneumococcal bug is one reason why Aboriginal people get sick and die at a younger age than the rest of the community. The pneumococcal vaccine helps to prevent the more serious side-effects of chest infections. The other good thing about this vaccine is that it lasts for 5 years.

Will It Protect Everyone From The Flu?

The flu vaccine ('Fluvax') is made up of the three most common strains present in the community in the previous year. Each year's vaccine will therefore be effective in 70% to 90% of cases.

Can Fluvax Cause Me To Get The Flu?

Fluvax does not cause people to contract the flu. People who contract the flu after having the Fluvax are often in the process of getting a cold when they are vaccinated. Some people think that the Fluvax has live viruses present. This is not so. The strains that have been used to make up the Fluvax have been inactivated. That is, the strains have been 'killed', but the best parts have been left so that when vaccinated the body can start building up antibodies to give us protection during the winter months.

How Long Does It Take To Work?

When it comes to preventing the flu, an annual flu shot is one of the most effective strategies available. Within 14 to 35 days of receiving the flu vaccination, 70 to 90% of healthy adults will experience an increase in antibodies that counter the influenza virus. The likelihood that a person will be protected increases dramatically each time the annual shot is given.

Are There Any Side-Effects From These Vaccines?

Side-effects from these vaccines depend on how healthy you are at the time of vaccination. They can include:

- pain, redness and swelling at the injection site
- low-grade fever
- muscle aches
- drowsiness or tiredness