

# Pandemic influenza vaccine after discharge from hospital



## ARE YOU PROTECTED AGAINST PANDEMIC INFLUENZA?

Getting the pandemic influenza vaccine (Panvax®) is the best way to protect yourself against influenza. It is available free from most GPs, Aboriginal Medical Services, some community health centres and local councils. Contact your local Public Health Unit for more information about where to get the vaccine. You should also talk to your GP about having seasonal influenza vaccination, which is available in autumn each year.

## WHY IS VACCINATION IMPORTANT FOR ME?

Panvax® is recommended for everyone but is particularly important for people with chronic medical conditions or weakened immune systems. People with chronic medical conditions are at increased risk of severe illness from influenza. If you have any of the conditions listed below (even if your recent hospital stay was for another reason), you should arrange to have Panvax® vaccination as soon as possible:

- heart conditions
- chronic lung conditions, including cystic fibrosis and severe asthma
- chronic neurological conditions and severe developmental delay
- a weakened immune system, including from cancer, leukaemia, organ transplants or HIV/AIDS
- a condition that needs oral or injected steroids for more than two weeks
- children receiving long-term medical treatment with aspirin
- other chronic conditions requiring regular doctor visits, including diabetes, kidney or liver disease and blood problems like sickle cell disease or severe anaemia.

Vaccination is also strongly recommended if you are Aboriginal, pregnant or very overweight – these people all experienced more severe illness from influenza than the general population in 2009.

## IS PANVAX® SAFE FOR ME?

The vaccine has been tested and carefully monitored both in Australia and overseas and has been found to be safe and effective. People who are severely allergic to eggs or who have had a severe allergic reaction to any influenza vaccine or vaccine component should not be vaccinated. Speak to your GP if you have particular concerns.

## WHERE CAN I GET PANVAX®?

Take this pamphlet and your hospital discharge letter to your GP and ask for Panvax® vaccination. This vaccine is **free, although your GP may charge a consultation fee. You should call ahead to make sure the practice is vaccinating on the day you wish to visit.** If you have any of the conditions listed above you can also have a **free** seasonal influenza vaccine each year.

## WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

You should ask your GP any questions you have about influenza vaccination.

## THE FACTS

- If you have been in hospital recently, you may be more at risk of severe illness from influenza.
- Protect yourself from pandemic influenza with Panvax® vaccination.
- Protect yourself from other types of influenza with a seasonal influenza vaccination.
- If you're at increased risk of severe illness from influenza, your GP or Aboriginal Medical Service can vaccinate you against both pandemic and seasonal influenza for free.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

NSW Health pandemic influenza website: <http://www.emergency.health.nsw.gov.au/swineflu/>

Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing pandemic influenza website: <http://www.healthemergency.gov.au/>

The Australian Government pandemic influenza hotline (free call): 1802007