DID YOU KNOW?

A single sneeze releases up to 40,000 droplets and can travel up to 1.8m.

A cough can generate 3,000 droplets, as can talking for 5 minutes.

In 2015, Australia had record influenza notifications of more than 96,000 cases.

Seasonal flu vaccines now come in two forms. Trivalent vaccines: These vaccines include two A strains and one B strain. Quadrivalent vaccines: These vaccines include two A strains and two B strains.

Please discuss with your flu vaccination team, which vaccine(s) are available for your program.

References:

Vaccination is the most effective protection against influenza.

Have you had your flu vaccination?

Talk to your staff nurse for more information on influenza vaccination.
12 Reasons for Healthcare Workers to have a yearly Flu Vaccination.

1. The flu virus is highly contagious, and can easily spread from person to person:
   - by sneezing mucus directly into the nose or mouth
   - when inhaling the aerosols produced by an infected person coughing, sneezing or talking
   - by touching contaminated objects such as bank notes, door knobs and light switches

2. Flu can be debilitating, and is more severe than a cold where you mostly have a runny nose and sore throat. With flu, you can also have a fever, body aches, shivering, and extreme fatigue, that can last for up to 2 weeks.

3. Due to close contact with patients, healthcare workers have a higher chance of contracting flu.

4. As a duty of care to vulnerable patients i.e. if flu is passed on to an elderly patient, infant or someone with underlying conditions, the consequences may be severe.

5. Help protect your family from flu, and consider what may be missed if any of you are unwell e.g. holidays, days off work as a carer.

6. If you have the flu, you can be infectious to others for the 24 hours before symptoms start, and continue to be infectious for about a week after symptoms start.

7. Flu vaccination is the most effective method of preventing influenza. In terms of the efficacy and effectiveness of influenza vaccine, this depends primarily on the age and health of the vaccine recipient and the degree of similarity between the virus strains in the vaccine and those circulating in the community.

8. The World Health Organisation and the local body, the National Health and Medical Research Council recommend yearly flu vaccination for healthcare workers.

9. The dominant flu strains often mutate year to year and the effects of the vaccine wear off over time, so yearly flu vaccination is recommended.

10. You can’t get the flu from the vaccine. The vaccine is inactivated, hence, it does not contain any live viruses and cannot cause the illness. Some people may experience mild flu-like symptoms after having the flu vaccine but these should only last a few days. You can come down with the flu within the first 2 weeks after having a flu vaccine, it takes this long before the vaccine starts to work.

11. Vaccines, like other medicines, can have side effects, however the majority of side effects are minor. Common side effects following flu vaccination include soreness, redness, pain and swelling at the injection site, drowsiness, tiredness, muscle aches and low grade temperature. These side effects are usually mild and go away within a few days, usually without any treatment. Serious reactions to immunisation are very rare, however if they do occur a doctor should be consulted.

12. The flu virus does not discriminate. Even fit and healthy people can catch the flu. The past is no predictor of the future.