

**Friday 29 January 2010**

## **Media Release >>Influenza Vaccination Programme for 2010**

H1N1 pandemic influenza is likely to be the main strain this year and the Southland and Otago District Health Boards anticipate another busy time responding to this epidemic as most people do not yet have immunity.

Vaccination is the most effective way of preventing influenza and the usual seasonal influenza vaccination programme is expected to commence in early March. "This will help immunize people against three influenza strains including the H1N1 pandemic strain," says Otago and Southland Medical Officer of Health Dr Marion Poore. "As usual this will be available from family doctors and some workplaces."

"However it's possible the influenza season may start earlier than usual this year so an early protection vaccine for the pandemic strain only, is available from 1<sup>st</sup> Feb in Otago and 8<sup>th</sup> Feb in Southland to help protect the health workforce and high risk patients," says Dr Poore.

The Otago and Southland DHBs, and Primary Health Care Organisations, are working with the Ministry of Health on this early, targeted immunisation programme across the two regions.

This vaccine will be available to those health professionals who may have direct contact with at-risk patients, pregnant women or people under 65 years of age (including children) with underlying health conditions such as obesity, chronic respiratory disease, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, renal disease, cancer and other conditions at dedicated clinics only. There is no cost for this vaccination.

In Otago from 1 – 14 February 2010, clinics will be held at Dunedin Hospital, Oamaru, Balclutha and Dunstan trust hospitals and some general practices.

In Southland clinics will commence from Monday 8 – 21 February and will be held at general practices, Southland Hospital, Lakes District Hospital and Gore Health.

The early protection vaccine requires two doses, three weeks apart, with those receiving the vaccine will be given an appointment time to return for their second dose.

Dr Poore said the DHBs are keen to offer early protection to those who most need it in case the next wave of influenza arrives earlier than usual. Immunisation will help protect health care workers and those at risk of flu complications and reduce the pressure on our health system.

The Ministry of Health recommends that those at highest risk of complications have this early protection vaccine, followed by the seasonal influenza immunisation when it becomes available.

For more information on clinics in Otago and Southland please contact your local doctor or practice nurse.

For further information visit <http://www.moh.govt.nz/influenza> or the Immunisation Advisory's toll-free number 0800 IMMUNE (0800 466 863).

### **Otago Clinic Times:**

**Otago DHB staff will deliver the early protection vaccine at Dunedin Hospital for both identified frontline healthcare workers and PHO patients who meet the high risk criteria.**

<b>: 1 – 5 February 2009</b>	<b>Clinic for at risk patients and identified healthcare workers</b> Venue: Breastscreening Clinic, 1 <sup>st</sup> Floor, Ward Block, Dunedin Hospital Time: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday 5pm – 7.30pm
<b>: 8-12 February</b>	
<b>: 23-26 February (2nd dose clinic)</b>	<b>Clinic for identified healthcare workers</b> Venue: Orthopaedics Outpatients, Dunedin Hospital Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday 3-5pm
<b>: 2-5 March (2<sup>nd</sup> dose clinic)</b>	

### **Clinics will also be held in Oamaru, Balclutha and Dunstan**

Clinics will also be held for identified staff and at risk patients in Oamaru (from 17 February), Balclutha (from 15 February) and Dunstan (8 February). Clinic times, dates and venues to be confirmed.

### **Southland Clinic Times**

General practices throughout Southland will be holding early protection H1N1 pandemic influenza clinics for high risk patients in Southland.

Anyone who believes they may be eligible to receive the early protection H1N1 pandemic immunisation should contact their local doctor or general practice nurse as soon as possible to make an appointment

Clinics will also be held at Southland Hospital, Lakes District Hospital and Gore Health for identified health care workers.

### ***Who is eligible to receive the pandemic early protection vaccine?***

Frontline healthcare workers – staff in general practice, St Johns, emergency departments, intensive care units, midwives, oncology, respiratory ward, paediatrics and those who may have direct contact with at-risk patients.

- People under 65 years of age (including children) with underlying health conditions such as chronic respiratory disease, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, renal disease, cancer and other conditions.
- Pregnant women.
- People who are morbidly obese.
- And all children aged from 6 months to their fifth birthday enrolled in designated practices that have high proportions of people who are Maori, Pacific and/or from high deprivation areas.

***What are the symptoms of influenza?***

- Fever and chills
- Headache and a sore throat
- A sore chest
- Coughing and sneezing
- Body aches and pains
- Extreme tiredness

***How is the pandemic monovalent early protection vaccine administered?***

Produced by Baxter Healthcare, the vaccine protects against H1N1 influenza only. This vaccine currently requires two doses, three weeks apart.

***How can you prevent infection?***

Good hygiene practices - covering coughs and sneezes, hand washing with soap and water, and dry thoroughly, and staying away from others if you're sick. These simple steps can protect not only yourself but others in the wider community

**ENDS**

**Media Queries**

For more information please contact

Jo Harvey, Regional Communications Officer, Southland and Otago District Health Boards on 03 21 47 243 or 027 674 1758.