



## HELPFUL HINTS REGARDING INFLUENZA

The influenza season is well and truly here. The Influenza Specialist Group (ISG) has developed the following points regarding influenza which you may find useful.

### **If you have not yet suffered influenza this year:**

- Remember, influenza can strike as late as October in most parts of Australia, it may not be too late to consider vaccination.
  - Influenza vaccination is **STRONGLY** recommended for older people (aged 65 and above), younger people with risk conditions and those in contact with these groups. However, other people may wish to protect themselves from infection.
  - You will gain some benefit within a few days of vaccination and the full benefit in about two weeks.
  - Children over the age of six months can be vaccinated; however, children under nine years require two doses a month apart for maximum protection.
- Influenza can be contracted by inhaling infected droplets from the air or by contact with contaminated surfaces.
  - If possible avoid crowds.
  - Remember to wash your hands or use disinfectant hand gels regularly and avoid hand to mouth or hand to face contact.

### **If you do develop the symptoms of influenza (which usually include chills, fever, muscular aches, headache and cough):**

- If it is within 48 hours of symptom onset your doctor can prescribe medication that acts specifically on the influenza virus. This will speed your recovery and reduce the chance of more severe disease.
- Rest at home to aid recovery.
  - Remember analgesics only provide symptom relief, they do not reduce the severity of the infection or the chance of you passing it on to others.
- Observe good hygiene measures.
  - Regular hand washing or disinfection.
  - **ALWAYS** cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing.

– ENDS –

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