

(Organisation name)

Form for staff who decline influenza vaccination

What is influenza?

Influenza is a highly contagious acute respiratory infection. The most common symptoms include fever, headache, muscle and joint pain, sore throat, cough, runny or stuffy nose and often fatigue. Influenza may cause more severe complications such as pneumonia, even death, particularly in the elderly and other vulnerable groups.

How is it spread?

The virus is spread from person to person through infectious droplets when an infected person coughs and sneezes and can also be acquired by touching contaminated surfaces.

Who should be vaccinated?

Anyone who wishes to avoid influenza, specific “at-risk” groups (eg. with asthma, chronic medical conditions, pregnancy) and healthcare workers caring for at-risk groups should be vaccinated annually. Taking part in the immunisation program will help to protect you, your workmates, patients/residents and family from influenza. It is also important to be vaccinated for influenza to help in the prevention of bird flu (Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza).

Does vaccinations work?

In healthy persons under the age of 65 years the vaccine is 70-90% effective if the vaccine closely matches the circulating virus. The effectiveness of the vaccine depends primarily on the age and the state of health of the person being vaccinated.

Is the vaccine safe?

Yes, the most frequent side effect is soreness at the vaccination site, which may last up to two days. Mild ‘flu-like’ symptoms such as fever, fatigue, and muscle soreness may occur but are not common (approximately 1 in 20 people). Other side effects are rare.

How do I know if I have Influenza?

The same symptoms of influenza can be caused by viruses other than the influenza virus. To confirm that an influenza virus is the cause, a special nose and throat swab needs to be tested early in the illness. This painless test can be done through the Staff Health Clinic.

What do I do if I get Influenza?

If you have a confirmed diagnosis of influenza (see above), to prevent spread to others, you must not attend work until your cough and fever goes away.

I, _____, have read and understand the information above. I have been offered the free 2005 influenza vaccine recommended by NSW Health Department and the World Health Organisation and have chosen not to be vaccinated
Signed _____ Date _____

Department/Ward _____ DOB _____