MINISTER FOR HEALTH

HIT ME WITH YOUR BEST SHOT

April 18th, 2013

Health Minister, Robyn Lambley, rolled up her sleeve today to promote the merits of the Health Department’s immunisation programs and to remind Territorians to have their annual influenza vaccine this year.

Commonly known as the flu, influenza is a virus infection that causes fever, runny nose, headache and severe muscle aches.

People often end up in bed for several days and some develop more serious complications. Although anti-virus medication can be given once someone has developed the flu, vaccination is the only way to stop you from catching it.

For those aged 6 months and over who are at risk of serious complications from influenza, the vaccine is recommended and given free of charge.

This includes all Indigenous people over the age of 15 years, people over 65 years, all pregnant women and anyone with conditions such as diabetes, heart, lung and kidney disease.

Pregnant women have been identified by the World Health Organisation as a very important risk group and can be safely vaccinated at any time during pregnancy. Vaccinating pregnant women provides protection for the mother and the baby.

“Even people who consider themselves to be fit and well can be vaccinated to protect themselves, their families, and other vulnerable people in the community,” Mrs Lambley said.

“Vaccines are available from community and remote health centres and most GPs.”

Flu vaccines take two weeks to work in the body and give protection for about 12 months so it is important to be vaccinated every year.

“Contrary to the common view, people cannot catch influenza from the vaccine,” Mrs Lambley said.

Next week marks the start of the World Health Organisation’s World Immunisation Week. A number of events are planned around the Territory promoting vaccination in adults and children in line with the theme “Protect your world – get vaccinated”.

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