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Beaches doctor pleads: get vaccinated

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Nadine Morton

UNVACCINATED, previously healthy young people are getting COVID and ending up in Northern Beaches Hospital's intensive care unit.

The number of active COVID-19 cases in the northern beaches might have stabilised in the last few days, but the impacts of those not getting vaccinated is being felt at the hospital, Dr Joe Marwood said.

The emergency medicine specialist is on the frontline treating COVID-affected patients in the hospital, and he has pleaded for people to get vaccinated.

"Our emergency department is continuing to see previously healthy, unvaccinated, young people who thought they would be fine, getting sick and going to intensive care," Dr Marwood said.

Currently, more than 92.5 per cent of northern beaches residents have received their first jab, and 76.3 per cent are double vaxxed, but Dr Marwood has urged those hesitating to get vaccinated.

"We're hopeful that higher vaccination rates will help to steady the number of cases on the Beaches," he said.

"The vaccines are safe and incredibly effective at reducing the risk of severe disease and death.

"More than 99 per cent of hospital staff are now vaccinated and we encourage northern beaches residents to do the same."

The hospital's medical centre has been providing Astra Zeneca vaccinations for several months and this month commenced Pfizer vaccinations. Appointments are available at online www.

northernbeacheshospital. com.au.

WELL EQUIPPED FOR COVID CASES

The hospital has a 10-bed ICU and a 26-bed ward dedicated to the care of COVID patients from across Sydney.

"This hospital is particularly well-designed for the care of patients during a pandemic, with multiple single rooms and a high number of negative-pressure rooms," Dr Marwood said.

"The hospital has also created a negative-pressure operating theatre, and the ability to open separate COVID-19 wards that have an independent air supply to protect the remainder of the hospital.

"We also have a respiratory assessment pod within the emergency department, to separate potential positive patients from others and all ED staff are wearing full PPE.

"Each day, the team conducts a virtual patient round at midday with some of Sydney's leading experts making care decisions for our COVID-19 positive patients."

Dr Marwood said anyone with even the mildest symptoms, including headache, gastro, cold or flu, should get COVID tested immediately.

"We would much rather see people in the early stages of their illness when we can intervene and potentially change the course of their illness," he said.

FRONT LINE: Emergency medicine specialist Dr Joe Marwood is on the frontline treating COVID patients. **Picture: Supplied**