MAY, 2020

Medicos say get flu vac now

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Pittwater Life, Sydney

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Health authorities are encouraging everyone who can get a flu vaccination to get it as soon as possible.

Practice Manager at Northern Beaches Hospital Medical Centre Lesley Power said the vaccination was free for many in the community including pregnant women, children under 5, adults over 65 and people diagnosed with a chronic illness.

For everyone else, the vaccine is available for $15 at the walk-in bulk-bill medical centre.

Flu shots are also available from local GP surgeries and some pharmacies, with many practices and hospitals setting up separate clinics to minimise patient-to-patient contact.

"Whilst the hospital is testing people who have COVID-19 symptoms, these people do not enter the medical centre and are in fact assessed in a completely separate clinic," Lesley said.

"As an extra precaution we also screen all patients coming into the medical centre, we check temperatures and we follow social distancing recommendations."

One of the medical centre's GPs, Dr Jonathan Adams, said: "I urge people to make sure they get their annual flu vaccination to prevent what can be a very serious illness, particularly for vulnerable groups."

The flu vaccine will help reduce the strain on hospitals and lungs – both seasonal influenza and COVID-19 can cause respiratory problems and even pneumonia; vaccinating again the flu this year is particularly important to reduce the risk of a dangerous double-up of life-threatening illnesses.

Washing hands well and often and practicing social distancing will help slow the spread of both COVID-19 and the flu. – *LO*

* From 1 May 2020, all aged care workers and visitors must have been vaccinated against seasonal influenza to enter an aged care facility.

PROCESS IN PLACE: Dr Jon Adams and Nurse Amy Beavan.