

MEDIA RELEASE

Diabetes Matters: Take Action To Prevent Seasonal Flu This Winter

Diabetes is a common long term condition affecting many people and families across New Zealand. People with diabetes are at increased risk of not only Covid-19, but also seasonal influenza.

Unlike Covid-19, influenza can be prevented through vaccination. Dr Helen Snell, President of the New Zealand Society for the Study of Diabetes (NZSSD) is urging all those with diabetes to be vaccinated as soon as possible. She said, “Preventing influenza is especially important this year with the Covid-19 pandemic in our midst. Immunisation is the best protection against influenza.”

Influenza is a significant public health issue particularly during the winter months. Up to one-quarter of New Zealanders are infected with influenza each year. “Of concern is that people with diabetes are more likely to get very sick and be hospitalised if they catch influenza.” says Dr Snell. “Any infection, including influenza, makes it more difficult to control blood glucose, and increase the risk of acute complications such as diabetic ketoacidosis.”

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the influenza immunisation programme has started earlier than usual for high risk people, which includes those with diabetes, to protect as many people as possible before influenza begins circulating widely in the community, in addition to Covid-19. The programme was to begin 1 April, but has been brought forward for high risk groups and is now available from general practitioners and pharmacists. Influenza immunisation is recommended and FREE for people with diabetes.

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About the New Zealand Society for the Study of Diabetes (NZSSD):

The NZSSD is an incorporated society that is open to those involved in the care of people with diabetes. It's members include diabetes specialist physicians, nurse practitioners, diabetes specialist nurses, podiatrists, dietitians, scientists, ophthalmologists, general practitioners, community health workers and researchers.

The NZSSD is the national advisory body on scientific and clinical diabetes care and standards. The NZSSD's objectives are to promote the study of diabetes and the best standards of care of diabetes in New Zealand. It also provides the national reference source in the subject.

<https://www.nzssd.org.nz/>

More information about Influenza:

<https://www.fightflu.co.nz/>