



NO TIME FOR COMPLACENCY ON SWINE FLU - AMA

AMA Vice President, Dr Steve Hambleton, said today that the AMA is encouraging people to visit their GP to be immunised against swine flu.

It has been reported that there are still far too many Australians who have not been vaccinated to protect themselves from the virus.

Dr Hambleton said that people should not be complacent because of the warmer weather or because swine flu is no longer dominating the TV and radio news or the newspaper headlines.

“Swine flu is still a deadly virus, especially for pregnant women and for people with chronic conditions,” Dr Hambleton said.

“But perfectly healthy people can also become very sick from the virus.

“With people travelling more over the summer holidays, there is also a greater chance of transmission of the virus.

“People should contact their doctor to arrange a time to have the vaccine. GPs are providing the vaccine to patients in general practices right around the country.

“It is a very simple injection that provides high level protection.

“There is no point in taking chances with your health,” Dr Hambleton said.

In Australia, swine flu has killed 189 people and hospitalised nearly 5000 people.

Dr Hambleton said that Australians should be aware of the international experience with swine flu. For example, these recent reports:

- According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, swine flu has infected 22 million people in the United States, and killed 3,900 people in the first six months of the pandemic,
- About 90 per cent of the deaths in the US have been people younger than 64,
- The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control reported on 11 November that swine flu deaths in Europe had doubled in three of the four previous weeks, and
- As at 12 November, a total of 124 people in England, 33 in Scotland, 14 in Wales, and 11 in Northern Ireland were confirmed to have died from swine flu, according to England’s Chief Medical Officer.

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