



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Protect yourself from the flu this season**

Gippsland Lakes Community Health is now taking appointments for this season's Influenza and Pneumococcal Vaccination Clinics.

The influenza vaccination is recommended and free for people aged 65 and over, or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who are over aged 15 and older, everyone with a medical condition that increases risk of influenza complications such as heart disease, chronic lung and kidney disease, neuromuscular disorders, diabetes, low immunity and other chronic illnesses requiring regular medical follow-up or hospitalisation.

"Influenza is caused by viruses which are constantly changing, and therefore a new vaccine must be developed and given each year. This year the swine flu vaccine has been incorporated into the flu vaccine," said Cheryl Bush, executive manager of Clinical and Nursing Services.

"The pneumococcal vaccination, unlike the influenza, is generally only given twice, five years apart."

"This vaccination is recommended and available free to people aged 65 years or over, indigenous people aged 50 years or over and those aged 15-49 years with risk factors such as smoking, heart, lung or kidney disease, diabetes or alcohol-related problems."

People who fall into any of the above categories are advised to consult their doctor or arrange an appointment as soon as possible.

Swine flu vaccinations are also available free of charge to all members of the community via prescription, however it does not provide protection from other influenza strains.

For more information and appointments contact Gippsland Lakes Community Health.

