

26 March 2021

Dear Residents

VACCINATION INFORMATION: PNEUMONIA, FLU AND COVID-19

We have received many enquiries around the vaccination options available at present through the Evergreen health clinics. Here follows information about availability and our recommendations. Please speak to the nurse at your Evergreen health village clinic for more info.

At the moment, we can get pneumonia vaccinations, we are awaiting our flu vaccination stock and expect to wait for quite a while before we get access to the Covid19 vaccination in phase 1 for our healthcare workers and our residents through government channels in phase 2.

Please note:

It is recommended that one has a one-week gap between the Pneumonia and Flu vaccine and a 1-month gap between the flu and the Covid19 vaccine.

Pneumonia vaccination

Pneumonia which invades the lungs is a major cause of life-threatening invasive infections worldwide.

It spreads through physical contact, coughing or sneezing. Symptoms include fever and chills, chest pain, shortness of breath, rapid breathing and heart rate, low oxygen levels, tiredness and weakness, nausea, vomiting and headaches.

People with other chronic health problems or co-morbidities have an increased risk of pneumonia. This includes chronic lung, heart or liver diseases, diabetes, and HIV. The older we get, the higher our risk of pneumonia becomes.

We currently have access to and can Pneumovax, which has to be given every 5 years. The vaccine is given in the form of an injection into the upper arm/deltoid muscle. Side effects are generally mild and may include sensitivity at the injection site, raised temperature and nausea, headache, fatigue, body aches, differing from person to person.

Influenza vaccination

Flu (influenza) is a common respiratory illness that affects millions of people every year, caused by a virus, which enters the lungs but soon affects the whole body.

It can spread easily through droplet infection coughing and sneezing and by unwashed hands. In most people, influenza is contagious for up to 2 days before the onset of symptoms and for about 5 days after they begin. Some people who get influenza develop serious complications. Flu reduces a person's resistance to other infections and antibiotics have no effect on viral illnesses like the flu.

We can protect ourselves by getting an influenza vaccination (or flu shot) every year in the autumn months before winter. This can help prevent the infection or reduce the severity of the illness. The flu vaccines are made from influenza viruses that have been concentrated, inactivated and then broken apart. The vaccine is unlikely to cause flu, as is commonly thought, as it does not contain live viruses. The vaccine is given as an injection in the upper arm, deltoid muscle.

Influenza immunization is important especially for:

Adults and children with chronic heart and lung disease; People 65 years of age and older; Anyone living in a chronic care facility; People with chronic conditions such as diabetes, anaemia, cancer, immune suppression or HIV; Health care workers, caregivers and household contacts in close contact with the above at-risk groups and; People at high risk of influenza complications or who travel a lot, especially on flights. The side effects of flu vaccine include a sore arm with redness and possible swelling or warmth and pain at site of injection; fever; chills, headaches.

We have flu vaccine Inluvac tetra and Vaxigrip tetra on order.

Covid-19 Vaccine

Covid19, caused by the corona virus is currently wielding a global pandemic causing death and disease in most countries. The vaccine has only recently become available and the roll out in South Africa is still in phase 1, which concerns healthcare workers and other essential workers. The next phase 2 will include people over 60 years and those with co-morbidities. The electronic vaccination registration system is only open to health workers at present. The current tempo of vaccination, available only through the national government, indicates that it will still be quite a while before official vaccination starts in our villages.

The vaccination is also given in the upper arm and causes side effects such as pain at injection site, fever, chills, body aches, headaches and feeling unwell for a couple of days. For this reason, it is currently recommended that there should be a 1-month gap between the Covid19 vaccine and any other vaccinations.

Our Evergreen Health clinics cannot order the vaccine-we are reliant on the country's public health services at this stage and are still awaiting vaccination of our own health staff.

If you have had allergic or anaphylactic reactions to vaccines in the past, it is be a good idea to discuss this with your doctor. Usually, these vaccines are then given in a hospital setting.

While vaccination is a key step in protecting yourself, it shouldn't end there. Boost your immunity by including fresh fruit and vegetables in your diet. If you start feeling run down, get more sleep. Avoid close contact with people who have any infections, and make sure you regularly wash your hands. If you are sick, stay away from others to avoid the flu from spreading to your friends, family and co-workers. Wear a mask and maintain social distancing.

Contact your Evergreen Health clinic nurse to find out more.

We can order the pneumonia and flu vaccinations for you and administer the injection at our clinic or at your home. Don't wait - vaccinate!



Elize Porter
Managing Director
Evergreen Health (Pty)Ltd



Dr. Guin Lourens
Nursing Manager
Evergreen Health (Pty)Ltd