

Doctors fear flu season could be deadly with fewer shots

Doctors fear Queensland could face a deadly influenza season this year with fewer people getting vaccinated because of COVID-19 measures.

Australian Medical Association (AMA) Queensland President Dr Dilip Dhupelia said GP clinics were seeing a drastic reduction in the number of flu shots compared with the same time in 2019.

“People have been adhering to COVID-19 restrictions and staying at home, but these measures are set to start easing this week,” Dr Dhupelia said.

“As more people start resuming normal activities, we are likely to see a rise of influenza. At this time last year, there were 900 confirmed cases of flu in Queensland.

“If you get the flu, you are at greater risk of getting COVID-19 which would be a double whammy. Having both would make you extremely ill.

“We need people to get their flu shot now so we don’t come out of one crisis only to face another one.”

Dr Dhupelia said it was understandable to be concerned about COVID-19 infection risks but GP clinics had strict infection control measures in place and were safe for patients to visit to have their flu shot.

“From now until mid-May is the best time to have your flu shot and I’m urging Queenslanders to make an appointment today to see their GP for a vaccination,” he said.

Dr Dhupelia said doctors were also worried about other illnesses and conditions arising and deteriorating during COVID-19.

“People with high blood pressure, asthma or age-related conditions that require regular medication and check-ups need to continue to take care of their health during this time,” he said.

“It only takes a month or two for some of these conditions to become gravely serious.”

Dr Dhupelia said seeing your doctor was considered essential under the COVID-19 restrictions.

“I’m urging Queenslanders to make an appointment at their GP today so they can enjoy a healthy life once the COVID-19 restrictions are over.”