

The flu is coming: “which side are you on?”

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HOW WILL THE INCOMING FLU BE?

The news, circulated in recent days, have spoken of an aggressive virus: “It does not appear that the effects of the disease are different from those of the past year,” assures the head of the Department of infectious diseases of ASST Valle Olona Dr Tiziana Quirino, “this does not mean that we can lower our guard: the risk is linked to the complications that can appear in subjects at risk.” The vaccine includes the traditional H1N1 virus strain panegyric and other two new strains compared to last year.

WHO CAN HAVE THE VACCINATION FREE OF CHARGE?

The categories are always the same: those over 65, people with chronic heart, pulmonary or metabolic diseases, operators who are in contact with the elderly and sick, the police, children on the advice of the pediatrician, pregnant women after the first trimester of gestation. “The national goal,” said Dr Anna Maria Maestroni, Medical Director of the Ats Insubria, “is to get to 75% coverage. The goal, however, is very far away: last year only 40% of those eligible underwent the vaccine. We are ready with 100,000 doses that can be increased to meet the demand for all. We have launched an awareness campaign because the more you create a healthy environment and covered, the more it ensures well-being and health to all”

WHY GET VACCINATED?

In recent years, in Italy there has been a steady decrease of vaccinations. Not only the flu but also more

serious illnesses for which we recommend vaccination coverage among children: “There is confusion and little knowledge of drug surveillance system,” said Dr **Aldo Palumbo of Hygiene and Public Health service of the Ats Insubria**. “The surveillance system is both on the progress of the disease and about possible reactions to vaccines that are registered. All information is collected and thoroughly evaluated to improve the response.” “We are very concerned about the trend: the percentage of vaccinated children has fallen below 95% for all diseases,” added Dr Quirino, “**there is a great risk of the return of dangerous diseases** and it’s not a question of migration flows.” Last season, the peak endemic was recorded the eighth week and lasted 12 weeks: there were 89 severe cases and 32 deaths.

HOW MANY DOSES ARE AVAILABLE

100,000 doses have been purchased to meet the demand of the 202,000 over sixty-fives of the province and of the risk categories. A special promotion has been thought for **the new 65 years old, approximately 11,700 people**, who will receive a personalised card: “It is an age when we feel young and in shape.” Explained the Medical Director, “but you forget the problem of social cover that acts as a shield to those who are not in good physical condition.”

CHILDREN

“In our offices in Varese,” explained **Dr Alberto Macchi of the ASST Sette Laghi**. “We have reserved some places for children who can book them. For everyone else, access is free ”

WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON?

This is the chosen slogan to try to get involved a growing slice of the population at risk. They will also be involved **speakers** to promote the benefits of the vaccine, but also explanatory brochures will be found in the districts, with doctors and other social places. Those that don’t fit in the categories at risk but want to get coverage may apply , with a fee, to **pharmacies**.

di [Alessandra Toni](#) Translated by Prof. Robert Clarke