

Protect yourself and others Get your flu vaccine!



What do I need to know about the flu (influenza)?

- The flu is a serious disease. It is estimated that there are 20,000 hospitalizations and 4,000 deaths each year in Canada related to the flu
- Symptoms of the flu may include fever, headache, general aches and pains, fatigue and weakness, runny/stuffy nose, sore throat and cough or chest discomfort
- The flu does not usually cause stomach upset, diarrhea or vomiting

I am healthy, do I still need the flu vaccine?

- It is important for everyone over six months to get a flu vaccine each year
- Influenza can cause serious illness even in healthy people
- Even if you are not very sick, you can pass the flu onto someone at high risk for more serious complications

Who is most at risk?

Anyone can get the flu.

- Those most at risk for complications include:
 - Children under five years of age
 - Pregnant women
 - People with chronic health conditions (e.g., diabetes, heart and lung disease, cancer, obesity)
 - People 65 years of age and older
 - Aboriginal people
 - Residents of nursing homes, retirement homes or other chronic care facilities

Can the flu vaccine give you the flu?

- The flu vaccine can not give you the flu because the viruses in the vaccine are either killed or weakened
- The flu vaccine is very safe and has been given in Canada for many years. The most common side effect is a sore arm. Serious reactions are rare
- The benefits of getting the flu vaccine outweigh the risks. If you get the flu, you may miss several days of work or school, or could even be hospitalized

I had the flu vaccine but I still got sick. Why?

- You may have had a different illness. There are other illnesses which cause flu-like symptoms (e.g., common cold, strep throat). The flu vaccine protects only against illness caused by influenza
- You may have been exposed to the flu virus before the vaccine took effect. It takes about two weeks after you get the flu vaccine for it to become effective
- You may have been exposed to a flu virus that was not included in the flu vaccine. Each year the flu vaccine protects against three strains of the flu virus that research shows will be most common

Where can I get my flu vaccine?

You can get your flu vaccine as soon as it becomes available each fall from:

- Your family doctor's office
- Many workplaces
- Many local pharmacies
- Local Urgent Care clinics
- Public Health clinics

For more information contact:
519-575-4400 (TTY 519-575-4608)

www.regionofwaterloo.ca/seasonalinfluenza

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