



MEDIA ADVISORY
December 15, 2008

Subject: It's Still Flu Shot Season!

As families and friends plan to get together over the holiday break, they should also plan to stay healthy and reduce the spread of diseases such as influenza. Influenza can be deadly for people with lung, heart or kidney disease, and those with other underlying conditions such as diabetes. The very young and the very old are also vulnerable to this highly contagious respiratory disease.

The Canadian Coalition for Immunization Awareness & Promotion advises that influenza immunization is the most effective way to prevent influenza. Other effective means to reduce the spread of the influenza virus include:

- Washing hands frequently
- Sneezing or coughing into your sleeve or a disposable tissue
- Keeping shared surfaces clean, e.g. doorknobs, light switches, keyboards, telephones
- Staying home if you get sick

Every year in Canada, seasonal influenza and its complications lead to an average 4,000 deaths and 20,000 hospitalizations. Media across Canada can help reduce these numbers by encouraging everyone to get immunized (a flu shot).

It's still influenza season, so why not add getting a flu shot to your 'To Do' list?

Ask your doctor, nurse, pharmacist or local public health office about immunization.

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About the Canadian Coalition for Immunization Awareness & Promotion:

The Canadian Coalition for Immunization Awareness & Promotion is a coalition of national health and consumer groups committed to the promotion of immunization as the best way to prevent influenza. The goal of the annual campaign is to increase immunization rates by promoting the benefits of influenza immunization for all ages.
immunize.ca

More links and backgrounders:

Influenza Immunization Awareness Campaign 2008: Influenza Bulletins # 1-4
<http://immunize.cpha.ca/en/diseases-vaccines/influenza.aspx>

The Public Health Agency of Canada
www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/im/influenza-eng.php

Fight Flu
www.fightflu.ca

Provincial and Territorial Ministries of Health and Regional Health Authorities
<http://immunize.cpha.ca/en/publications-resources/links.aspx>

Who should be immunized?

- 1) People at high risk of influenza-related complications, including:
 - adults and children with cardiac or pulmonary disorders including asthma, diabetes mellitus and other metabolic diseases, cancer, immunodeficiency, immunosuppression (due to underlying disease and/or therapy).
 - people with renal disease
 - people with anemia or hemoglobinopathy
 - people with conditions that compromise the management of respiratory secretions
 - children and adolescents with conditions treated for long periods with acetylsalicylic acid
 - all residents of nursing homes and other chronic care facilities
 - adults aged 65 years or older
 - children aged 6 to 23 months
 - pregnant women
- 2) People capable of transmitting influenza to those at high risk of complications, including:
 - health system workers and other care providers who could transmit to those at high risk
 - household contacts of those at high risk
 - household contacts of infants less than 6 months old
 - pregnant women in their third trimester especially, and women at all stages of pregnancy and breastfeeding mothers
 - those providing regular child care to children 0 to 23 months
 - those who provide services within closed settings to persons at high risk
- 3) Others:
 - people who provide essential community services
 - people in direct contact with avian influenza-infected poultry during culling
 - **healthy people aged 2 to 64 years should be encouraged to receive the vaccine even if they are not in the above groups**