



# NEWS RELEASE

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## FLU VACCINE AND CHILDREN – WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

The Health Unit is encouraging all parents and their children to get the flu shot. A flu shot clinic will be held at the Health Unit on Saturday, November 18, 2017 so that parents, and anyone young or old wanting the flu shot, can get vaccinated quickly and easily. Influenza (“flu”) can lead to serious complications in children under five, including pneumonia, ear infections, and dehydration which can result in hospitalization.

“When we talk about the flu, we often mistakenly think it’s the same as the common cold,” says Andrea McLellan, Manager of Vaccine Preventable Disease. “The truth is, the flu can be extremely dangerous, especially in children under five. This is because their immune systems are still developing and their small airways can be prone to blockage. To help protect your children from getting the flu and from passing it on, we strongly encourage parents to vaccinate their children and to get themselves vaccinated as well.”

The flu shot is very safe. Even if you are pregnant or breastfeeding, you can safely get the flu shot. In fact, a pregnant mother’s flu shot will protect the baby for several months after they’re born – which is when there is a high risk for flu complications. The flu shot does not give you the flu, and it is proven to reduce the number of doctor visits, hospitalizations and deaths related to the flu. The vaccine is different each year because the virus changes frequently – so you need to get it every year.

As children learn and play together in schools and daycares, they are at risk of getting and spreading the flu. Protect them with the flu shot, which is your child’s best defence against influenza. It’s safe, free, and it’s available at the Health Unit, from select health care providers and pharmacies.

The flu shot clinic will be held on November 18, 2017 from 10 am – 1 pm. It is open to everyone in need of the flu shot. For more information contact the Health Unit at 705-474-1400 ext. 2349 or visit [www.myhealthunit.ca/FluShot](http://www.myhealthunit.ca/FluShot)

## Quick Facts

- Follow the Health Unit on Facebook, and enter our Flu Season contest for a chance to win a \$50 gift certificate to your local grocery store!
- Flu (influenza) is a contagious respiratory infection caused by influenza viruses. Flu can cause mild to severe illness that can lead to hospitalization or even death.

- The flu can lead to serious complications including pneumonia. The flu can also make chronic health issues worse.
- In Canada, the flu season generally begins in late fall and winter months. It's a good idea to get vaccinated at the start of the flu season.
- It takes two weeks for the flu vaccine to reach maximum protection, so be sure to get the vaccine as soon as it is available.
- To prevent the spread of Influenza and other diseases:
  - Wash your hands often with warm water and soap
  - Cough or sneeze into your sleeve or use a tissue
  - Stay home when you are sick

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