

For Immediate Release | Jan. 10, 2019

Not too late to get the flu shot

With several months left in this year's influenza season, Interior Health reminds the public it's not too late to get the flu shot.

Influenza is a serious respiratory illness that easily spreads from person to person. People of any age are at risk of influenza. Those with chronic medical conditions (such as heart and lung disease, or weakened immune system), young children, and people 65 and older are at increased risk of influenza-related complications.

Across the region, influenza activity continues to increase. The dominant strain circulating this year is influenza A H1N1, which predominantly affects children and non-elderly adults. This strain is included in this year's vaccine.

"The flu shot is the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones from influenza and influenza-related complications," said Dr. Silvina Mema, Medical Health Officer, Interior Health. "This year's vaccine has shown to be a good match for the strains of influenza circulating this season."

The influenza vaccine is still available across the region at public health centres, as well as some pharmacies and physician offices.

The flu shot is free for the following people:

- People 65 years and older and their caregivers/household contacts;
- People of any age in long-term care facilities;
- Children and adults with chronic health conditions and their household contacts;
- Children and adolescents (six months to 18 years) with conditions treated for long periods of time with Aspirin (ASA), and their household contacts;
- Children and adults who are morbidly obese;
- Aboriginal people;
- All children six months to five years of age;
- Household contacts and caregivers of infants and children from birth to five years of age;
- Pregnant women at any stage of pregnancy during the influenza season and their household contacts;
- Visitors to hospitals, health centres and long-term care facilities;
- People who work with live poultry;
- Health-care and other care providers in facilities and community settings who are capable of transmitting influenza disease to those at high risk of influenza complications;
- People who provide care or service in potential outbreak settings housing high-risk persons (e.g., crews on ships); and
- People who provide essential community services (first responders, corrections workers).

Flu shot locations:

Appointments are available at public health influenza immunization clinics. For children under five years of age and their immediate family, call your local health centre to book an appointment.

Individuals older than five years of age and eligible for publicly funded vaccine may obtain vaccine by calling their local health centre, pharmacist, or physician office.

Individuals who are not eligible for the publicly funded vaccine may purchase it from a pharmacist.

Reduce the spread of germs

In addition to getting your flu shot, it's important to reduce the spread of germs.

- Wash your hands frequently throughout the day, especially after coughing or sneezing;
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue;
- Stay home if you are sick; and
- If your children are sick, keep them home from daycare and schools.

For more information on influenza visit [HealthLink BC](#).