Immunity for your community: get the flu shot today!

This year, Interior Health is calling on you to take action and increase immunity for your community by getting the annual flu shot.

Anyone can get the flu—a sometimes serious and even deadly infection of the upper airway caused by an influenza virus that spreads easily from person to person. Getting your flu shot can protect you from getting the flu, but the flu shot is about more than just protecting yourself. Getting the flu shot plays an important role in protecting your loved ones, especially those whose health is most vulnerable.

“Having the flu shot reduces both your risk of getting the flu and spreading it to our most vulnerable loved ones who are at high risk of flu-related complications,” says Dr. Silvina Mema, Interior Health Medical Health Officer. “We especially recommend those at risk as well as visitors to hospitals, long-term care facilities and other patient care locations get the flu shot.”

Children under five years of age, pregnant women, Aboriginal people, people over the age of 65, and adults and children with underlying health conditions are at an increased risk of serious complications if they get the flu.

Patti Morven, a resident of Kelowna and a member of the Nisga’a First Nation, is a family support worker. She understands the importance of getting the flu shot for her community.

“I work with the very young and with Elders,” says Patti. “Getting the flu shot not only provides safety for my mom but also the families I’m in contact with throughout the flu season.”

The flu shot is available through your pharmacist, health care provider, First Nations community health nurse, or your local health unit. Interior Health (IH) immunization clinics will begin the week of Oct. 28 and will continue in communities throughout November, with flu shots available by appointment throughout the rest of the season.

To find an influenza clinic or provider near you, visit Immunize BC and click on “Find a Clinic,” watch for local announcements, or contact your local public health centre, physician’s office or pharmacy.

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 to 59 months of age;
- Household contacts and caregivers of infants and children from birth to 59 months 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;

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• 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).

For more information about flu season and the flu shot visit: 2019-2020 Seasonal Influenza Campaign.

Interior Health is committed to promoting healthy lifestyles and providing a wide range of quality health-care services to more than 750,000 people living across B.C.’s vast interior. For more information, visit www.interiorhealth.ca, follow us on Twitter @Interior_Health, follow us on Instagram @weareIH, or like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/InteriorHealth.

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