



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

People are advised to get their flu shots

IQUALUIT, Nunavut (October 30, 2012) – The annual campaign to vaccinate Nunavummiut against influenza is underway. The vaccine is free and is available at health centres throughout Nunavut, and in Iqaluit at public health.

The FluMist vaccine was introduced last year, and this year the FluMist program is expanded to include children from 2 to 17 years of age. Children and youth in this age group will be offered the spray in the nose vaccine, not a needle in the arm.

“People at greatest risk from the effects of influenza are the very young and the elderly, and we can do our part to protect our children and elders by getting our flu shot,” says Dr. Maureen Baikie, Chief Medical Officer of Health. “People protect themselves and loved ones from influenza when they are vaccinated.”

There is less chance of children bringing the flu home from school to their families when they are vaccinated.

Influenza is spread through coughing, sneezing or nasal fluids. Symptoms include fever, loss of appetite, sore muscles, sore throat and feeling tired. Proper hygiene like regular handwashing and coughing or sneezing into a sleeve or tissue can help stop the spread of germs.

The influenza season runs from January to May in Nunavut. Dr. Baikie encourages people to get their vaccinations before Christmas so people will be protected when influenza arrives in Nunavut.

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Backgrounder

Influenza and the Influenza Vaccination Campaign

- Influenza is a virus that affects a person’s respiratory system. Symptoms include fever, headache, chills, sore throat, not feeling hungry, muscle aches, feeling tired, runny nose, and sneezing.
- Babies, young children and the elderly are most at risk of serious illness and hospitalization due to influenza.
- Influenza vaccine is the most effective way for you and your family to stay healthy.
- Influenza vaccine is safe and helps strengthen your immune system to fight influenza.
- People can get the influenza vaccine by going to their health centre, and in Iqaluit at public health.
- The flu vaccine is free and is available to everyone in Nunavut over the age of 6 months. There is no influenza vaccine product available for infants under 6 months.
- The FluMist spray in the nose vaccine is available for children age 2 to 17.
- The goal is to achieve a 50 per cent vaccination rate in Nunavut this year.
- www.flunu.ca is Nunavut’s influenza website.
- Influenza typically runs from January to May in Nunavut.
- Influenza is spread through coughing and sneezing.
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing to prevent the spread of influenza.
- People should wash their hands and wash them often to limit the spread of influenza.
- The influenza vaccination program is a national campaign.
- Public Health Agency of Canada’s website is: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/fluwatch/>.