

Health Unit Media Release



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Immunization Awareness Week April 24-30, 2005

Immunization is very important in the battle to eliminate and control a large variety of serious life threatening infectious diseases. **One hundred years ago these infectious diseases were the leading causes of infant mortality worldwide.** In Canada they now cause less than 5% of all death thanks to the immunization programs that are provided through our health care systems. **This number one health prevention strategy has saved more lives and disabilities in our population.** It is the single most cost-effective health investment in our population that promotes health.

Unfortunately due to the success of the immunization program we now observe a degree of complacency. We are now taking this health benefit for granted questioning the need for immunization.

We must continue to be vigilant with the rise of antibiotic resistant organisms, we must continue to support immunization and maintain a high level of immunization rates in our population to prevent the return of these illnesses. **Science has proven that when immunization rates drop the diseases return.** So it is important for us to continue to be pro-active rather than reactive with the health of our population and continue to support the health of our families in the provision of immunization programs in your community.
BE WISE AND IMMUNIZE!!!

Parents protect your teens Get Immunized with MEN C

Meningitis C is an uncommon but serious infection of the blood lining of the brain and or/spinal cord. It can appear suddenly with symptoms of fever, headache, stiff neck and rash and can cause lasting injury or death. Teens are at higher risk for this disease because there is more sharing of food, drinks cigarettes and kisses. **Spit happens!**

This newly funded vaccine provides protection against Meningococcal C disease and is available for free to any person born between **January 1, 1985 and December 31, 1990.** Grade 7 students will be offered the vaccine when the Public Health nurses are in the schools providing hepatitis B vaccine. This vaccine is also available to 12 year olds who are not in grade 7 and **children who are one year of age born after September 1, 2004.**

The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit will be offering community clinics during the months of April and May 2005. If a student who is 12 or 15 - 9 years of age cannot attend, or is ill on the clinic date he/she can receive the vaccine from the family doctor or medical clinic.

For more information on immunization, contact the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit at 1-800-660-5853 or 345-5685 or visit our website at www.healthunit.org.

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