

# Health Unit Media Release

For Immediate Release: Oct 4, 2007



## FLU SEASON IS FAST APPROACHING

**Influenza is a preventable illness that can be very dangerous to some individuals. The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit recommends annual immunization against influenza for any persons over 6 months of age. By getting immunized you will be protecting yourself as well as those around you. Last year, 11,663 people got their flu shots at community clinics sponsored by the Health Unit.**

Flu vaccine provides adults and children with active immunity against the influenza virus. It is needed every year because the vaccine provides protection for only a short period of time. It protects against three strains of influenza most likely to be circulating during this flu season. **While many myths exist about immunization, the flu shot is the safest way to protect yourself and your family and friends from the influenza virus.** This year, NACI has recommended that all pregnant women receive the influenza vaccine. Children who are over the age of 6 months and under the age of nine and are getting the flu shot for the first time should get a second dose one month later. **There are some people for whom the flu shot is not recommended, please check with the Health Unit for more information on this.**

"The influenza vaccine does not contain live virus," says Jane Fatcher, Director of Clinical Services, "Most people have no reaction at all to their vaccine, while some report having pain at the spot where the needle is given. This can last up to 2 days. Some people get muscle aches and fever and feel tired for a day or two after the needle. This is not influenza."

The vaccine protects about 70 percent of people who get a flu shot. You can still get the flu, but you will be less sick than if you were not vaccinated. The protection rate in seniors is less, as their immune systems are weaker. **Provided seniors are immunized, the vaccine can prevent secondary infections, such as pneumonia, that are caused by having influenza.**

**Our local Health Unit ( as part of a larger provincial exercise) will be testing our ability to provide vaccine in the event of a pandemic by having a Mass Immunization Exercise in Smiths Falls on November 30<sup>th</sup>. Watch for more details in early November.**

### HOW CAN YOU GET THE INFLUENZA VACCINE?

Getting immunized against influenza is easy and free. See your health care professional or attend one of the flu clinics in your area. For more information about the flu and for a listing of free flu shot community clinics, contact the Health Unit at 1-800-660-5853 or 613-345-5685 or visit our web site at [www.healthunit.org](http://www.healthunit.org).

-30-

Contact:

Jane Fatcher, RN, MA, Director of Clinical Services or  
Rebecca Kavanagh, RN, BScN, Manager Vaccine Preventable Disease Program  
at 613-345-5685 or 613-283-2740