

Health Unit Media Release

Date: January 23, 2009



Influenza has arrived in Leeds Grenville and Lanark

The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit reports the first case of influenza in the tri-county for the 2008-2009 season. Influenza (the flu) is a serious illness. It is caused by influenza viruses and occurs in Canada every year. Influenza causes fever, cough, headache, muscle soreness, sore throat and stuffy nose and can lead to pneumonia. It can also make other illnesses worse, especially those that affect the lungs and heart.

"Influenza spreads very easily from an infected person to others through coughing and sneezing," says Dr. Anne Carter, Medical Officer of Health for the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit. "Avoid contact with those who are infected and wash your hands frequently to avoid spreading the virus. Those who are ill should stay home and use tissues to block coughs and sneezes". Influenza is also spread by direct contact with surfaces or objects like clothes, toys, eating utensils, etc. after they have been contaminated by the flu virus.

Influenza vaccine provides adults and children with active immunity against the influenza virus. ***The vaccine cannot give you the flu because it does not contain live virus.*** There is still time to get vaccinated if you have not received a flu shot already. **Call your local Health Unit office for an appointment or see your family physician.**

Antiviral medication can reduce the severity of influenza. Therefore, those who are severely affected or who have chronic diseases should seek medical advice if they suspect that they are suffering from influenza.

For more information on influenza or the flu vaccine visit our website at www.healthunit.org and click on "quick links" or call the Health ACTION Line at 1-800-660-5853 or 613-345-5685.

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