

Health Unit Media Release

Oct 16, 2012



Flu Season Is Approaching

Influenza is a preventable illness that can be very dangerous to some individuals. Because influenza is extremely contagious and can spread rapidly from person to person, it is important for individuals to protect themselves as well as others in the community: **Get a flu shot, wash your hands, use hand sanitizer, keep frequently touched hard surfaces clean and disinfected, cover your cough, and stay home when you are sick.**

Flu vaccine provides adults and children with active immunity against the influenza virus. **The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit recommends annual immunization against influenza for any persons over 6 months of age.** A new flu vaccine is produced each year to protect against the three strains of influenza most commonly circulating during the flu season. Pregnant women are recommended to receive the influenza vaccine. Children between the ages of 6 months and nine years may need to get a second dose. **There are some people for whom the flu shot is not recommended, please check with the Health Unit for more information on this.**

Vulnerable populations in the community such as very young children, pregnant women, people over 65, and adults and children with chronic health conditions such as diabetes, respiratory, cardiac, kidney disease or cancer are at greater risks for serious complications from the flu. **The flu shot is the safest way to protect yourself and your family and friends from the influenza virus.** The vaccine protects about 70 percent of people who get a flu shot. However, the protection rate in seniors is less, as their immune systems are weaker. Some people may still get the flu but being vaccinated will help to reduce the severity of their symptoms.

The flu vaccine does not contain live virus therefore it can't give you the flu. Most people have no reaction to having a flu vaccine while some report having tenderness at the injection site for a few days. After receiving a flu shot some people may have a mild fever, feel tired, or have muscle aches -- this is considered a normal reaction to having a vaccination. It is not the flu.

HOW CAN YOU GET THE INFLUENZA VACCINE?

Getting immunized against influenza is easy, convenient, and free. See your health care provider or attend one of the Health Unit's community flu clinics. **There are 17 community clinics being held this year from November 1st to Dec 13th.** The clinics are offered in 14 communities and have convenient hours. 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/clinics or like the Health Unit on Facebook for important updates.

-30-

Contact:

Margaret Hendriks, RN, BScN, Manager, Department of Community Health Protection 613-283-2740 or

Susan Healey, BA, Communications Co-ordinator at 613-345-5685 or 613-802-0550.