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**NEWS RELEASE**

**ADULTS ARE MISSING AVAILABLE PROTECTION FROM SERIOUS DISEASE**

**April 23, 2008 (OTTAWA, ON)** – Adults are not aware that they could be missing critically important protection against some serious diseases. Lack of immunization is leaving many adults of all ages vulnerable to diseases such as pertussis (whooping cough), tetanus and hepatitis.

“Adults are under-immunized in Canada,” confirms Dr. Bonnie Henry, Chair of the Canadian Coalition for Immunization Awareness & Promotion. “Recent outbreaks of measles and mumps in Canada, and three deaths from tetanus in BC last year, remind us of the importance of immunization throughout our lifespan.”

According to a recent Leger Marketing survey<sup>1</sup>, 27% of adults do not know whether they are up to date with recommended immunization, and 64% do not keep a record of the vaccines they have had. Six in ten adult Canadians do not feel knowledgeable about immunizations recommended for adults.

Under-immunized adults are at risk of contracting diseases and also infecting others. Adults who contract pertussis, for example, can infect infants who may not have completed the full schedule of immunization. The Leger survey showed that most adults (61%) consider personal protection as the main motivation for immunization, while preventing the spread of disease to others was less important (10%).

“Vaccines offer good personal protection from diseases, but also protect others,” states Dr. Susan Bowles, Vice Chair of the Canadian Coalition for Immunization Awareness & Promotion. “If you work with or visit young children, older persons, people who are being treated for cancer or others whose immune systems may be weak, you should make sure you’re not passing on a life-threatening but preventable disease.”

Not all vaccine-preventable diseases are passed from person to person. Tetanus spores, for example, are found in dirt and even in dust. The only way to prevent tetanus is immunization every ten years.

The findings also showed that most adult Canadians are waiting for their doctor to recommend immunization instead of taking the initiative to get the information they need. The Canadian Coalition for Immunization Awareness & Promotion web site has a list of vaccines recommended for adults at [www.immunize.ca](http://www.immunize.ca), including a self-questionnaire to complete and take to a health care provider.

Canadians are urged to talk to their doctor, nurse, pharmacist or local public health office about vaccines that can protect them as adults, and to keep a personal record so they know what vaccines they’ve had.

**NOTE: For local information about immunization recommendations please contact your local public health office.**

**For national information contact:**

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**About the Canadian Coalition for Immunization Awareness & Promotion**

The Canadian Coalition for Immunization Awareness & Promotion is a coalition of 28 national organizations. Its mission is to contribute to the control, elimination, and eradication of vaccine-preventable diseases in Canada by increasing awareness of the benefits and risks of immunization for all ages via education, promotion, advocacy and media relations.

**National Immunization Awareness Week**

National Immunization Awareness Week, April 20-26, 2008, reminds us of the importance of immunization to preserve the good health of our children, families, workplaces and communities. Look for special events in your area, organized by your local public health office, clinic, hospital, pharmacy or workplace. Immunization experts will be available in all parts of Canada to comment on our most effective tool to prevent disease – vaccines!

National Immunization Awareness Week in Canada coincides with Vaccination Week in the Americas organized by the Pan American Health Organization [www.paho.org](http://www.paho.org) and European Immunization Week [http://www.euro.who.int/Slovenia/20080325\\_1](http://www.euro.who.int/Slovenia/20080325_1)

**Links**

1. *Leger Marketing* <http://legermarketing.com/documents/spclm/080423en.pdf>