



MEDIA RELEASE

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Influenza (flu) prevention begins with you.

Influenza, or the flu, is a highly contagious and infectious respiratory disease caused by the influenza virus.

"Some people think that influenza is a mild illness, but influenza not only causes primary illness, but can also lead to severe secondary medical complications that can lead to hospitalization or even death, particularly in people with risk conditions," says Dr. Susan Bowles, Chair of Immunize Canada.

"Many Canadians don't know that children under the age of 5 and seniors over 65, people with chronic illnesses such as asthma, diabetes or heart disease, pregnant women, Aboriginal people, people who are obese, and residents of nursing homes and other health care facilities are vulnerable groups that need protection from influenza," explains Dr. Bowles.

"This makes influenza prevention by healthy individuals who can pass it on to those at high risk for severe complications a necessity," says Dr. Shelly McNeil, Vice Chair of Immunize Canada. Healthy individuals can shed the influenza virus and transmit it before they experience any symptoms. "That's why it is so important to get vaccinated against influenza every year," explains Dr. McNeil.

This fall, Immunize Canada encourages the vaccination of all Canadians over the age of 6 months against influenza, to protect them and others around them.

The seasonal influenza vaccine is safe and the most effective way of preventing the spread of influenza. The best time to get vaccinated is from October through to December, but it is never too late. Talk to your doctor, nurse, pharmacist or public health office about getting vaccinated with this year's influenza vaccine.

For more information, please visit immunize.ca.

Media Enquiries

Lucie Marisa Bucci
Immunize Canada
(613) 725-3769, ext.151 / Email: immunize@cpha.ca

About Immunize Canada

Immunize Canada is a coalition of national non-governmental, professional health, consumer, government and private sector organizations. It is a trustworthy and independent voice in support of immunization of children, adolescents, adults and health care professionals.