

WHO SHOULD GET THE SEASONAL INFLUENZA (FLU) VACCINE

The influenza vaccine protects against viruses that cause seasonal influenza, often called the flu. The vaccine does not protect against other viruses or bacteria that cause colds or stomach illness such as “stomach flu.”

Influenza, often called seasonal flu, is an infection of the nose, throat and lungs caused by the influenza virus. A person with influenza is at risk of other infections, including viral or bacterial pneumonia (infections of the lungs). Influenza spreads easily from person to person through coughing, sneezing, or having close face-to-face contact. The virus can also be spread when a person touches an object contaminated with the influenza virus and then touches his or her mouth or nose.

In BC, the following groups are eligible for the free annual vaccination:

- ◆ Children and adults with chronic health conditions and their household contacts
- ◆ Healthy children from 6 months of age to less than 5 years of age
- ◆ Household contacts and caregivers of children from birth to less than 5 years of age
- ◆ Pregnant women at any stage of pregnancy during the influenza season
- ◆ People 65 or older and their caregivers
- ◆ Residents of nursing homes and other chronic care facilities
- ◆ Health care workers
- ◆ Emergency responders
- ◆ Owners and operators of poultry farms
- ◆ Aboriginal peoples
- ◆ People who are very obese (those with a body mass index of 40 or greater)
- ◆ Corrections officers and inmates in provincial correctional institutions
- ◆ Those who provide care or service in potential outbreak settings housing high risk persons (e.g. crew on ships)

Influenza vaccine is available through health units, physicians and pharmacists. The vaccine is free for anyone in the above groups.

For more information contact:

- ◆ Your local Health Unit
- ◆ HealthLinkBC at 8-1-1 (a free call) or www.healthlinkbc.ca
- ◆ HealthLink BC Files www.healthlinkbc.ca/servicesresources/healthlinkbcfiles/index.html
- ◆ Your doctor
- ◆ www.immunizebc.ca

Health Units:

Esquimalt	250-519-5311	Salt Spring Island	250-538-4880
Outer Gulf Islands	250-539-3099	Sooke	250-642-5464
Peninsula	250-544-2400	Victoria	250-388-2200
Saanich	250-519-5100	West Shore	250-519-3490