

## **2010 INFLUENZA IMMUNIZATION**

This year, a single influenza shot protects you against both seasonal influenza **and** H1N1. All Albertans (six months of age and older) are eligible to receive this year’s influenza vaccine, free of charge. Those at higher risk of severe influenza illness are encouraged to get immunized early in the influenza season.

### **What’s new or different about influenza immunization this year?**

Although the World Health Organization recently declared the H1N1 pandemic over, the H1N1 influenza virus still exists, and is expected to continue circulating this season. This year, a single influenza shot protects you against the three strains of influenza expected to circulate this influenza season: H1N1, Influenza B, and H3N2.

### **I was immunized last year. Do I need to be immunized again this year?**

Yes. Influenza viruses change from year to year, and when influenza viruses change, so do influenza vaccines. Each year, the World Health Organization identifies the strains of influenza expected to circulate that year, and the influenza vaccine is then developed to protect against these strains. To protect yourself against influenza, you need to be immunized against influenza each year.

### **Can I get a shot that protects against seasonal influenza but not H1N1?**

No. The influenza shot contains all three strains; when you get immunized, you are protected against H1N1 and H3N2 and Influenza B.

### **Is the influenza vaccine safe?**

Yes. The influenza vaccine has been approved by Health Canada for administering to individuals aged 6 months and older, including pregnant women. Vaccines must go through a rigorous testing process, and meet stringent safety standards, before receiving approval from Health Canada. The vaccine can safely be given when you are taking most medications and / or receiving other vaccines such as Pneumococcal vaccine or routine childhood vaccines. Children under 9 years of age who have not received at least one dose of seasonal influenza vaccine in past years, will require two doses of this year’s influenza vaccine, given at least four weeks apart. Consult your healthcare provider if you have further question.

### **Who should NOT have the influenza vaccine?**

The following persons should not receive influenza vaccine:

- Persons with a history of severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to eggs
- Persons who have had an unusually severe reaction to the influenza vaccine in the past
- Children younger than six months of age. The seasonal influenza vaccine is not licensed for this age group.

### **How effective is the influenza vaccine?**

It takes about two weeks after immunization to develop protection against influenza. Protection may last up to one year. The vaccine will not protect against colds and other respiratory illnesses that may be mistaken for influenza but are not caused by the influenza virus. When there is a good match between the influenza strains in the vaccine and the strains circulating in the community, the vaccine has been shown to prevent influenza illness in about 70% to 90% of healthy adults and children. Research has shown that influenza vaccine reduced the incidence of severe illnesses and complications such as pneumonia and hospital admission by up to 60% and deaths by 80%. Physician visits, hospitalization and death in persons at high-risk of influenza complications are also reduced.

### **What are the possible side effects of the influenza vaccine?**

Most people have no reaction to the seasonal influenza vaccine. Reactions that do occur are typically mild. They usually occur within 6 to 12 hours after the immunization and commonly disappear within 24 to 48 hours. Possible reactions include:

- Redness, mild pain and/or swelling where the needle was given;

- Irritability and/or tiredness
- Headache, muscle aches and pains
- Fever and chills

If you have any questions about the immunization you received, or have any unusual symptoms after the immunization, **call HEALTHLink Alberta** at:403-943-5465 in Calgary, 780-408-5465 in Edmonton, Toll Free 1-866-408-5465 elsewhere in Alberta

### **When will the influenza vaccine be available and where are the Immunization Drop-In Clinics?**

Alberta Health Services offer the influenza vaccine starting on Oct 12 to public via Influenza Immunization Drop-in Clinics. For local clinic details, please go to <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/immunization> or call HealthLink Alberta. Influenza Immunization Drop-in Clinics will offer both Seasonal and Pneumococcal Vaccination. Please bring your Alberta Health Care card and wear a short sleeve shirt.

### **Calgary Clinics**

Drop-in clinics run from October 12<sup>th</sup> to Dec 18<sup>th</sup> 2010 but there will be no clinic on November 11<sup>th</sup>. Hours of operations are: Monday to Thursday 1:00pm to 8:00pm, Friday to Sunday 9:30am to 4:30pm

**Avenida Village** 303, 12445 Lake Fraser Drive SE Calgary T2J 7A4, Use the northwest Parking area.

**Brentwood Village Mall** 302, 3630 Brentwood Road NW Calgary, T2L 1K8, Use mall entrance next to Safeway

**EMS Whitehorn, North Side Entrance** 100, 3705 35 Street NE Calgary, T1Y 6C2

**Richmond Road Diagnostic Treatment Centre** 1820 Richmond Road SW Calgary, T2T 5C7,

**South Calgary Health Centre** 31 Sunpark Plaza SE Calgary, T2X 3W5. Only from October 12<sup>th</sup>~Oct 24<sup>th</sup>, same hours

**Stampede Park** 1410 Olympic Way SE Calgary, T2G 2W1, Enter at south end of Stampede Park.

### **Edmonton Clinics**

Drop-in clinics will run from October 12<sup>th</sup> to November 30<sup>th</sup> but there will be no clinics on Sundays. Hours of operations are: Monday to Thursdays 9:00am to 8:00pm, Fridays and Saturdays 9:00am to 4:00pm. No clinics on November 11<sup>th</sup> except for Bonnie Doon Shopping Centre.

**Bonnie Doon Shopping Centre**, 82 Avenue 83 Street S, Edmonton, T6C 1L1, open only from October 12<sup>th</sup> to Nov 13<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

**CDI College South Campus (formerly Taylor college)**, 11525 23 Ave Edmonton, T6J 4T3, Gymnasium, clinics on two Sundays, October 17<sup>th</sup> and October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

**East Edmonton Health Centre**, 7910 112 Avenue Edmonton, T5B 0C2, Parking lot on west side

**Jewish Community Centre**, 7200 156 Street Edmonton, T5R 1X3

**Milbourne Market Mall**, 7609 38 Avenue Edmonton, T6K 3L6

**Northgate Health Centre**, 9499 137 Avenue Edmonton, T5E 5R8, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor

**Westend Seniors Activity Centre**, 9629 176 Street Edmonton, T5T 6B3

**Westmount Shopping Centre**, 111 Avenue Groat Road Edmonton, T5M 3L7, beside the food court

Clinics on two Sundays, October 17<sup>th</sup> and October 24<sup>th</sup> from 9:00am to 4:00pm.

### **Where can I contact for more information?**

To find any information regarding influenza vaccination, side effects, immunization clinics and any other inquiries, please contact Healthlink Alberta toll free at 1-866-408-LINK (5465). Mandarin Health Link Calgary at 403-943-1554, Cantonese Health Link Calgary at 403-943-1556.

Source: Alberta Health Services website, [www.albertahealthservices.ca](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca)

If you want to read any of the previous ‘Road To Healthy Living’ series articles, please go to [http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/programs/diversity/multilingual\\_health\\_services.htm](http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/programs/diversity/multilingual_health_services.htm) and get health information in your own language