

Influenza vaccination – regional key messages and Q&As for Eeyou Istchee

The flu virus has been affecting many people throughout Canada, and symptoms from the virus can be quite severe. It's important to ensure you get vaccinated to avoid catching the flu!

If you haven't been vaccinated against the flu this year, the Public Health Department of the Cree Health Board urges you to visit your local clinic and get your flu shot. The flu shot is safe and effective in protecting you against flu infection. It is possible that you'll still catch the flu virus, but your symptoms will be less severe if you're vaccinated.

Babies and toddlers, Elders, pregnant women, and people with chronic conditions like asthma or diabetes are at greater risk of developing complications from the flu virus. Getting vaccinated doesn't take long and it's safe! You will protect yourself and your loved ones, especially those at risk.

Flu vaccination facts:

- The flu vaccine is the most effective way to prevent catching the flu. The vaccine is safe and effective.
- Flu vaccination can make flu symptoms milder if you do catch the virus. Studies show that flu shots often prevent the worst complications, like pneumonia and death.
- To prevent catching the flu and other illnesses, it's important to regularly wash your hands with warm water and soap. In public places, you can also clean your hands with an alcohol-based sanitizer.
- If you're sick with flu-like symptoms, don't go to work or school until you're healthy again!

A number of common flu symptoms include: cough, fever, chills, body aches (including muscle pain and joint pain), extreme fatigue. Babies with flu can have atypical symptoms like vomiting.

It's not too late to get your flu shot at your local clinic! We still have a long and cold flu season ahead!

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Q: Is the flu vaccine safe?

A: Yes. Flu vaccines, like all other vaccines recommended in Canada, are tested and monitored for safety for many years before they are used.

There is NO evidence of any systemic harm to children or anyone else who receives these recommended vaccines. A number of common side effects from the flu vaccine include: Soreness, redness, and/ or swelling at the site of injection, and less commonly cold like symptoms like headache, muscle pain and fever for a brief period.

Q: Is Flu vaccine effective?

A: Yes. Flu vaccinations are the most effective way to prevent influenza disease or flu. Flu vaccination can also reduce doctor's visits and missed work and school due to flu, as well as prevent flu-related hospitalizations and death. Flu vaccination is especially important for those of us at a higher risk of complications of flu, like people over 60, people with chronic illness, babies and pregnant women. It should be noted that, there are many different flu viruses, a flu vaccine provides decent protection against the viruses that research suggests will be most common. Therefore, it is possible still for people to get infected with less common viruses not included in the flu shot.

Q: Where can I get more information about the flu and the flu vaccine?

A: If you have any questions about the flu or the flu vaccine, we invite you to write to us at the Public Health Department of the CBHSSJB.

There are many misleading websites which contain non-scientific and false information about vaccine safety, on the Internet . If you read an article like this, or have any questions or concerns about the flu vaccine, we are happy to answer via private message or in the comments!

You can also visit other reliable health websites for more information, such as:

> The Immunization Canada website: <https://immunize.ca/questions-and-answers>

> Government of Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization/vaccine-safety.html>