



H1N1 Flu Update March 5th, 2010

Alberta Health Services vaccination clinics are open. Clinic details can be found at:
<http://www4.albertahealthservices.ca/immunization/>

It's not too late to get your influenza shot!

It's still winter out there across Alberta and along with it, it's still influenza season too! Influenza viruses are expected to continue to circulate in Alberta's communities and have the potential to spread influenza illness.

It's not too late to be immunized! Alberta is only partway through its normal influenza season and an immunization will still protect you and your family from serious influenza-related illness.

Want to help your family avoid getting sick?

An influenza immunization is safe and will help keep you healthy

All Albertans six months of age and over are eligible to receive the H1N1 vaccine.

All Albertans who want to be immunized will have the opportunity. Alberta Health Services will continue to deliver vaccine to all Albertans who wish to receive it.

Vaccination is the single best defence against H1N1, and we recommend all Albertans get their vaccination.

Individuals who are considered high-risk are strongly encouraged to receive the seasonal influenza vaccine.

Seasonal influenza vaccine is strongly recommended for:

- All adults 50 years and older
- Less than 65 years with a chronic health condition
- Healthy children 6 to 59 months (6 months to 5 years)
- Children 6 months to 18 years with chronic conditions treated with long term ASA
- Health Care workers/ Health Care Students
- Pregnant and lactating women



- Long term care residents and staff
- Household contacts of those at high risk
- Anyone providing regular child care to children less than 2 years of age
- Anyone living in a chronically disadvantaged situation (homeless)

Foothills Health Consultants has both the H1N1 Influenza Vaccine and the Seasonal Influenza Vaccine available.

Please call our office to book your appointment to receive the flu shot.

Should I get the H1N1 flu shot and the seasonal flu shot?

Yes, our physicians are recommending that everyone be vaccinated unless they have a specific contraindication to receiving the flu shot.

If I get the seasonal flu vaccine can I still get the H1N1 vaccine and do I have to wait?

Currently there is no wait period between receiving the vaccines. Both vaccines can be done at the same time, just in separate arms.

The good news:

Most people will have mild symptoms and do not require any medical attention. Recent evidence suggests that a significant proportion of adults over the age of 60 may have some preexisting immunity from exposure to flu viruses in the past. There are medications available for severe cases which help to shorten the course and severity of the flu. These are not recommended for everyone.

The best way to avoid getting the flu is to take precautions:

1. Cough or sneeze in to a tissue or your bended arm.
2. Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 15-20 seconds (the amount of time it takes to sing "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star"). Hand sanitizers are also an excellent choice. Hands must be completely dry and free from any lotions or creams before applying the gel. Water inactivates hand sanitizers. Sanitizers should contain at least 60% alcohol.
3. If you are ill, stay home for at least seven days or until all your symptoms have completely resolved. (You must not have a fever without the use of Tylenol or Advil)



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4. If you have reason to believe that you may have the flu do not go to Emergency or your doctor until you have contacted Health Link first.

Questions:

1. When are the seasonal flu vaccine and the H1N1 vaccine available?

The regular seasonal flu vaccine and the H1N1 are now available. This year the government is paying for both the seasonal flu vaccine and the H1N1 vaccine for everyone. Pregnant or lactating women are advised to be vaccinated at the Public Health Clinics because they will be carrying a special vaccine which has lower levels of Thiomersal.

2. How does the flu spread?

Droplets from the respiratory tract are spread through coughing or sneezing. Droplets can travel up to two meters.

3. How long does the virus survive?

The virus can live on hard surfaces for one to two days and on soft surfaces for 8-12 hours. However, the virus can only infect a person for up to 8 hrs on hard surfaces and only a few minutes on soft surfaces.

4. How long does it take symptoms to appear?

The H1N1 virus has an incubation period (growth period) of 1-7 days with the average being 3-4 days. The regular flu has a shorter incubation period. (1-4 days). Transmission of the virus to other people is highest in the first few days.

5. What are normal temperatures?

Armpit: 34.7 - 37.3°C
Mouth: 35.5 - 37.5°C
Ear: 35.8 - 38°C
Rectal: 36.6 - 38°C

6. How do I know I have the flu?

Adults

Fever
Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea (more common in children under three)
Headache
Cough
Sore throat
Fatigue
Muscle aches

Children

Fever
Headache
Cough
Irritability
Seizures
Lack of appetite
Sore eyes



7. When should I be worried?

Adults

If you have heart disease, lung disease, chronic illness or taking medication that suppresses your immune system.

Shortness of breath at rest

Coughing up blood

Increased wheezing

Chest pain

Fever for 3 days without any improvement or return of fever after feeling well for a few days

Extreme drowsiness

Confusion

Constant vomiting or diarrhea

If you are pregnant

Children

Under 6 months of age

Chronic illness, heart or lung disease, immune system deficiency

Change in breathing—faster, more difficult, in-drawing of muscles between ribs

Listless or lethargic

Irritable and crying a lot

Urinates less:

- Dry diaper for more than 3 hrs in children under 6 months
- Dry diaper for more than 6 hrs in 6-23 months of age
- Going to the bathroom less often than every 6 hrs if 2yrs or older

WARNING: Do not give children Aspirin to control fever. It can cause a severe reaction known as Reye's syndrome. Use Tylenol or Advil.

Excellent Up-to-date Websites:

World Health Organization

<http://www.who.int/en/>

Public Health Agency of Canada

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/alert-alerte/h1n1/index-eng.php>

International SOS

www.internationalsos.com

Alberta Health Services

www.albertahealthservices.ca

Please call us if you wish to discuss anything.

Joining forces for your health.

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