

## **Keep Vaccinating! Immunizing during COVID-19 is Key to the Health of Canadians**

*National Immunization Awareness Week is 25 April to 2 May 2020. Trust. Protect. #VaccinesWork #NIAW2020*

**27 April 2020, OTTAWA, ON** — During National Immunization Awareness Week (NIAW), Immunize Canada wants all Canadians to keep vaccinating to ensure their defense against diseases is at full strength. Immunizations are critical to disease prevention, and stopping or slowing immunizations increases the risk of outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases. Immunize Canada has experts available for interviews.

Everyone wants to make the right choices for their family and to protect them from harm. This task is more challenging than ever during the coronavirus pandemic. While there is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus – although several are in development – there are numerous vaccines to protect your family against other infections such as measles, pertussis and meningitis.

Routine immunizations are highly effective in controlling infectious diseases. However, experts warn that delaying or cancelling routine immunizations during the coronavirus pandemic can potentially lead to outbreaks from vaccine-preventable diseases. There is additional concern that these mitigated diseases will propagate once restrictions on physical distancing and travel are relaxed. “Immunization is the strongest defense against preventable diseases,” says Dr. Anne Pham-Huy, Chair of Immunize Canada and a physician specializing in infectious diseases at CHEO, a pediatric hospital and research centre in Ottawa, Ontario. “It is more important than ever to keep your family's immunizations up to date. Delaying vaccines could leave your child, your family, and your communities vulnerable to infectious diseases.”

“Both science and history have shown that immunizations work to protect us. Children, elders, pregnant women, and others with compromised immune systems are most at risk of serious illness from the spread of disease,” says Dr. Angel Chu, Vice Chair of Immunize Canada and an infectious diseases physician at the Foothills Medical Centre in Calgary. “One of the best things we can do for our country’s health right now is boost immunization rates.”

Misinformation about vaccines is widespread. It may therefore be difficult to wade through the immense volume of news and data about vaccines – but a registered health care provider is the best source of information and during the coronavirus pandemic; they can help guide you to access immunizations. Talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist or local public health office about the immunizations you and your family need to stay healthy.

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### **For more information or to schedule an interview, please contact:**

Emma Mallach, Communications Manager  
Canadian Public Health Association  
Telephone: 613-725-3769, ext. 160  
Email: [communications@cpha.ca](mailto:communications@cpha.ca)

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Immunize Canada [immunize.ca](http://immunize.ca) @ImmunizedotCa  
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### **About Immunize Canada**

Immunize Canada is a national coalition with a specific interest in promoting the understanding and use of vaccines as recommended by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI).