



**MEDIA ADVISORY**  
**October 28, 2009**

**Subject: Don't get influenza. Don't spread influenza. Get immunized.**

This is an unusual and confusing influenza season. Influenza, commonly known as the flu, is an infection in the airways caused by the influenza virus. This year there may be two types of influenza circulating in Canada. So far, the new pandemic H1N1 influenza virus (pH1N1) has caused almost all cases in Canada. "Seasonal" influenza, which usually circulates each winter season in Canada, may also appear this season. pH1N1 influenza has been circulating since spring 2009. The evidence shows that it is affecting a different population from seasonal influenza, namely younger people.

**Protect yourself and those around you**

Some simple steps to protecting yourself and those around you from both seasonal and pandemic H1N1 influenza:

- 1) Wash your hands frequently
- 2) Cough and sneeze into your sleeve
- 3) If you are sick, stay home
- 4) Get immunized**

There are vaccines in Canada for both pandemic H1N1 influenza and seasonal influenza. These vaccines are judged to be safe and effective by Health Canada. They are both recommended by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) and other vaccine advisory committees.

**Who should get the vaccine(s)**

Canada's National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) recommends immunization for anyone who wants to reduce the risk of getting and spreading influenza. Please check with your local public health agency or primary care provider to ascertain when the two vaccines will be available and in what order.

Groups most at risk for seasonal influenza include infants, pregnant women, children and adults with chronic medical conditions, and adults 65 and older.

Health care personnel should receive both vaccines in order to prevent the spread of the viruses to those most at risk. It is recommended that they receive the pH1N1 vaccine first, as the pH1N1 virus is the first to have arrived.

Check with your physician, nurse, pharmacist or public health office about the risks and differences associated with each type of influenza.

## **Where and when to get the vaccine(s)**

Provinces and territories have different delivery plans for the seasonal influenza vaccine and the pandemic H1N1 influenza vaccine, so it is important to check with your local public health officials to determine where and when you can get immunized.

## **Symptoms of seasonal influenza and pandemic H1N1 influenza**

Both types of influenza have similar symptoms which typically last for 7-10 days; the cough and weakness may continue for up to 6 weeks.

## **Pneumococcal Immunization = Added Protection**

Ask your physician, nurse, pharmacist or public health office about pneumococcal vaccine. It may protect against pneumococcal infection, one of the most common complications of both pandemic H1N1 influenza and seasonal influenza.

## **Media Enquiries:**

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or

[Contact your local public health office.](#)

## **About the Canadian Coalition for Immunization Awareness & Promotion:**

The Canadian Coalition for Immunization Awareness & Promotion is a coalition of national health and consumer groups committed to the promotion of immunization. The goal of the annual Influenza Immunization Awareness Campaign is to increase immunization rates by promoting the benefits of influenza immunization for all ages.

[immunize.ca](http://immunize.ca)

## **More links:**

Public Health Agency of Canada. *Influenza*. <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/influenza/index-eng.php>

Public Health Agency of Canada: *Fight Flu*.  
<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/alert-alerte/h1n1/index-eng.php>

Public Health Agency of Canada. *Your H1N1 Preparedness Guide*.  
[http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/alert-alerte/h1n1/guide/pdf/h1n1\\_guide-eng.pdf](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/alert-alerte/h1n1/guide/pdf/h1n1_guide-eng.pdf)

Provincial/territorial influenza immunization programs/recommendations  
<http://immunize.ca/en/diseases-vaccines/influenza/provterrinfluenza.aspx>