



MEDIA RELEASE

Did you miss getting your flu shot in 2011? It's not too late!

For Immediate Release

OTTAWA – January 10, 2012 – Influenza season runs until April so it's not too late to get immunized against influenza - commonly called the flu. It's a highly contagious infection of the airways caused by the influenza virus and can spread rapidly infecting those around you.

Each year, influenza causes illness among millions of Canadians. "Some people resign themselves to getting sick in the winter months but influenza is not a mild illness like the common cold," says Dr. Susan Bowles, Chair of the Canadian Coalition for Immunization Awareness & Promotion. "Influenza is a serious viral infection with symptoms of cough, fever, fatigue and weakness, headache, general aches and pains, and respiratory congestion, and it can take several weeks to recover."

Influenza can lead to serious complications such as pneumonia, for some individuals. It is estimated that between 2,000 and 8,000 Canadians can die of influenza and its complications annually, depending on the severity of the season. For example, Dr. Bowles states that "there have been about a dozen confirmed cases of a new variant of H3N2 reported in the US but this new strain has not been seen in Canada at this point. This year's influenza immunization includes an H3N2 that matches the H3N2 virus that is circulating in Canada. It is a safe and effective way to prevent getting sick and spreading the virus to those around you."

Influenza activity is increasing in Canada and it is not too late to protect yourself and your family by getting immunized. Talk to your local public health department or your health care provider about getting this year's influenza vaccine.

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About the Canadian Coalition for Immunization Awareness & Promotion (CCIAP):

The Canadian Coalition for Immunization Awareness & Promotion (CCIAP) is a partnership of national non-governmental, professional health, consumer, government and private sector organizations. It is a trustworthy and independent voice in support of immunization of children, adolescents, adults, and health care workers. Its overall aim is to increase awareness about the benefits of immunization and promote the understanding and use of vaccines as recommended by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization.

The goal of CCIAP's annual influenza campaign is to increase immunization rates in Canada by promoting the benefits of influenza immunization for all ages. For more information, please visit: immunize.ca