

NATIONAL IMMUNIZATION AWARENESS WEEK 2019

AWARENESS CAMPAIGN IDEAS GET YOUR COMMUNITY INVOLVED!

National Immunization Awareness Week (NIAW) is held annually in late April. It's an opportunity to focus the attention of Canadians on the importance of vaccinations for all ages.

Members of **Immunize Canada** will spread the word at the national level. However, for this week-long campaign to be successful, we need the support of your community to get the message out to the 'grassroots'!

NIAW coincides with World Immunization Week (organized by the World Health Organization) and Vaccination Week in the Americas (organized by the Pan American Health Organization), during which countries encourage parents, caregivers, and health care providers to ensure that children and adults are immunized.

PREPARE

- Form a volunteer steering committee for National Immunization Awareness Week within your organization.
- Assess the needs of your community.
 - What programs are already in place to promote immunization?
 - Define your goals for NIAW.
 - Set objectives that can be evaluated after it's all over.
- Develop messages for your target audiences. Immunize Canada will have a sample community media release and key messages available for annual campaigns at immunize.ca.
- Once your objectives and key messages are established, develop information materials on immunization for your community. Assign one or more people to be 'media spokespersons'.

ACT

Here are a few suggestions to help you reach your intended audience.

Media

Submit news releases, opinion (op-ed) pieces and letters to the editor of your local paper focusing on your key messages. Contact journalists, editors and producers with story ideas and people to interview. Check immunize.ca for examples of radio ads, video PSAs and press releases. Immunize Canada's [YouTube channel](#) has a great collection of immunization-related videos.

Local Government

Ask your mayor or city/town council to proclaim National Immunization Awareness Week. [A sample proclamation is available on Immunize Canada's NIAW webpage](#). If you are successful, encourage your mayor and medical officer of health to hold a news conference to get National Immunization Awareness Week off to a good start. To support city hall, provide municipal offices with copies of your information kits on immunization.

Local Businesses

- Enlist the support of your local business association for National Immunization Awareness Week.
- Put up posters in shop windows.
- Seek corporate sponsorship for newspaper ads, radio announcements, and other publicity material. Stores that focus on children can provide special access to parents and caregivers. They may also be more willing to provide financial or in-kind support.

Schools

- Enlist the support of local school boards to promote National Immunization Awareness Week with principals and teachers. Use materials from the school-based [National Immunization Poster Contest](#) (held every two years in conjunction with the Canadian Immunization Conference), available on Immunize Canada's website.

- Ask teachers if you can speak to their classes about immunization as part of the curriculum for health or science.
- Download and distribute Immunize Canada's [colouring book](#) or the [20 Questions immunization quiz](#) and its companion resource, [Understanding the Correct Answers](#).
- Ask a local college health education, marketing, or communications department to conduct a community survey and release the results during Immunization Awareness Week.

Social Service Agencies

- Distribute promotional and educational materials to shelters, community centres, daycare centres, and other child-oriented agencies.

Service Clubs and Faith Communities

- Invite service clubs to get involved by raising funds or holding promotional events. Rotary International is a major supporter of international immunization programs.
- Speak to staff at programs for children in foster care, refugees/recent immigrants, persons with chronic diseases, shelters for the homeless, and seniors' residences.
- Ask local religious leaders to include messages about disease prevention in their sermons and prayers, and to include information about National Immunization Awareness Week in their bulletins and on their websites.

Libraries

- Be sure your local library has a copy of the 4th edition of [Your Child's Best Shot: A Parent's Guide to Vaccination](#), published by the Canadian Paediatric Society.
- Organize a 'story hour' at your local library where seniors can share stories about diseases when they were young. There may be a local branch of March of Dimes or a post-polio support group that may have willing spokespeople who have dealt with polio.

Health Care Providers

- Hold educational events or open houses at local hospitals, colleges, clinics, public health units, community health centres, and CLSCs.

Employers

- Ask employers to include an article in their staff newsletter or on their website.

EVALUATE

After National Immunization Awareness Week, assess your activities.

- How many participants took part in your community's activities?
- What were the challenges?
- What resources will be required for National Immunization Awareness Week next year?

Recommendations for next year will be important to you and Immunize Canada, so please let us know!

SUCCESS STORIES & IDEAS

collected from a variety of health organizations

Social Media / Online Promotion:

- Follow Immunize Canada on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#)
- Tweets/retweets and Facebook posts/likes re: National Immunization Awareness Week
Hashtags: **#VaccinesWork** **#GetVax**
- Badges or banner ads on blogs and community websites directly linked to credible information sources such as [immunize.ca](#)
- National Immunization Awareness Week information in e-mail signature block
- Blog post or e-newsletter article about National Immunization Awareness Week and/or immunization topic

Community Media:

- Articles on immunization topics written by local experts (e.g. myths and facts, herd immunity)

- Survey of knowledge, attitudes, beliefs for publication in local news
- Promotion of tetanus immunization to gardeners, in preparation for spring gardening
- Distributed local press releases with pro-immunization messaging
- Radio and community-channel public service announcements
- Ads and articles in staff newsletters, parent newsletters

Education:

- 'Lunch and learn' sessions, with experts around a particular immunization theme (e.g. sessions for nurses regarding parents' concerns around immunization, or a review of the current immunization schedule and what's new)
- 'Did you know?' series of e-mails to employees
- 'Test your VAQ' (vaccine awareness quotient) with health care providers
- Handouts in new-mom packages or visits to prenatal classes
- Visits to parent groups to discuss the importance of immunization for the whole family, including grandparents

Displays:

- Information booth/kiosk or display in hospital/health care facility/public health unit
- Information display at big-box stores or malls
- Poster and/or pamphlet distribution in schools, libraries, or community centres
- Advertising campaign in public transit (bus, subway, train)
- Promote National Immunization Awareness Week on staff uniforms (e.g. badges, fleece vests, etc.)

Clinics:

- Clinic days for immunizations (e.g. adult Td clinic pre-gardening session)
- Distribution of immunization resources during adult and baby clinics

Special Events:

- Preschool health fair
- Kindergarten health fair for children to receive their booster
- Local conference for immunization

Contests:

- Colouring contest in schools and local child care facilities to promote childhood immunization and reporting of vaccines to public health
- Prizes for improved immunization rates in a community
- Prize draws for public health nurses who promoted immunization awareness in their district
- Photographs of each person immunized for display; draw for prizes of those photographed

Add your success story!