



MEDIA RELEASE

PROTECT YOURSELF. PROTECT OTHERS. GET IMMUNIZED.

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In Canada, immunization programs have saved more lives than any other health intervention – making immunization the single most cost-effective health investment and a cornerstone in the effort to promote health.

During Immunization Awareness Week (IAW) from April 20 to 27, 2013, Immunize Canada reminds Canadians of all ages about the importance of being immunized against vaccine-preventable diseases.

“It is critically important that parents make sure their children receive all doses of the recommended vaccines. Otherwise they are at risk of some very serious diseases,” says Dr. Susan Bowles, Chair of Immunize Canada. “Infants are particularly vulnerable to many diseases that vaccines prevent since they have not yet developed immunity to the bacteria and viruses that cause them. Immunization triggers their immune systems to be prepared to protect them from these serious diseases.”

But childhood immunization does not provide lifelong immunity against some diseases such as tetanus (lockjaw) and diphtheria. Adults require helper, or booster, shots to maintain immunity.

“Under-immunized adults may be at risk of infection from vaccine-preventable diseases and can infect others,” states Dr. Shelly McNeil, Vice-Chair of Immunize Canada. “For example, adults who contract measles, mumps or pertussis (whooping cough) can infect infants who may not yet be fully immunized. These are two good reasons for Canadians to ensure that their immunizations are up to date,” says Dr. McNeil.

Immunizations are safe and benefit people of all ages. They protect individuals and communities by preventing the spread of disease. As more people are immunized, the disease risk for everyone is reduced.

Whether you are a parent, a young adult or a senior, talk to your doctor, nurse, pharmacist or local public health office about being up to date on your immunizations.



Backgrounder

Immunization Awareness Week

Immunization is recognized as the most cost-effective public health approach to decreasing vaccine-preventable diseases in the Canadian population. For example, through publicly funded programs, child immunization against debilitating diseases, such as meningitis, invasive pneumococcal disease, measles, and polio, amongst others, is made possible. These programs promote healthy children and healthy communities.

However, as public health authorities know all too well, the threats posed by infectious diseases continue to be an important risk. Immunization remains our best option.

Immunization Awareness Week, from April 20 to 27, 2013, coincides with other campaigns, including Vaccination Week in the Americas organized by the Pan American Health Organization and World Immunization Week organized by the World Health Organization.

About Immunize Canada

Immunize Canada is a national coalition of non-governmental, professional health, and government organizations with the overall aim of increasing awareness about the benefits of immunization and promoting the understanding and use of vaccines as recommended by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI).

Media Enquiries:

Lucie Marisa Bucci, Senior Manager

Immunize Canada

(613) 725-3769, ext. 151

immunize.ca