

# The Seasonal FLU SHOT

## FACT SHEET/CONSENT FORM

December 2009

### What is the flu?

Seasonal influenza (or "flu") is a respiratory illness caused by a virus. Most people who get the flu are ill for only a few days. Some people can become very ill and need hospital care. The flu leads to thousands of deaths each year, mostly among the elderly. Young children and those with chronic health conditions are also at risk. In Canada, the flu season usually runs from November to April.

### Flu Symptoms

Common symptoms of the flu include:

- cough
- fever
- sore throat
- chills
- headache
- runny nose
- fatigue
- muscle aches

Influenza rarely causes diarrhea or throwing up.

### How is the flu spread?

The influenza virus spreads when someone who is sick with the flu coughs

or sneezes, sending droplets into the air. You can get the flu by breathing in these droplets through your nose or mouth, or by these droplets landing directly in your eyes. Germs can also rest on hard surfaces like counters and doorknobs, where they can survive for up to 48 hours and be picked up on hands.

Washing hands, covering coughs and sneezes, cleaning surfaces, and staying home when ill, can help to reduce the spread of influenza.

### The flu shot

The flu vaccine is updated every year because influenza viruses change often. A flu shot is about 70% to 90% effective in preventing illness in healthy adults. Some people who get the flu shot may still get the flu, but it will usually be a milder case than if they did not get the flu shot.

### Who should get the flu shot?

All individuals aged 6 months or older who live, work or attend school in Ontario can get a flu shot for free.

The seasonal flu shot is highly recommended for these priority groups:

- Children 6 to 23 months of age
- Adults 65 years of age and older
- Adults and children with a chronic health condition, heart or lung diseases
- Residents of nursing homes and other chronic care facilities
- Pregnant women
- Health care and other care providers in settings who could spread influenza to those at risk
- Household contacts of people at high risk of flu complications
- Individuals who provide essential community services
- Family members or caregivers of high-risk populations
- Farmers and farm workers.

continued over →

## SEASONAL FLU SHOT CONSENT FORM 2009-10

Last Name (of Flu Shot Recipient) \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth     /    /           M    F      Age:  6 - 23 months    2-4 yrs    5-18 yrs    19-64 yrs    >65 yrs

Daytime phone \_\_\_\_\_

**I have read (or had explained to me) and understand the flu shot information above. I have had the chance to ask questions and to have them answered to my satisfaction. I consent to the influenza vaccine.**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please print name (if different than above) \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime phone (if different than above) \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to person receiving the vaccine if other than yourself \_\_\_\_\_

*(I certify that I am the appropriate substitute decision maker, custodial parent or legal guardian)*

### FOR STATISTICAL INFORMATION ONLY – Does the person receiving the vaccine, have any of the following:

Anemia, Asthma, Bronchopulmonary dysplasia, Cancer, Cardiac disorder, Cystic fibrosis, Diabetes, Hemoglobinopathy, Immunodeficiency, Immunosuppression, Lung disorder, Pregnancy, Renal disease, Long-term treatment with Aspirin (age 6 months to 18 years), Conditions that compromise respiratory secretions, Resident of a nursing home or chronic care facility.

Yes    No

## THE SEASONAL FLU SHOT FACT SHEET/CONSENT FORM

Healthy people ages 2 to 64:

- Get the flu shot to avoid getting sick and losing time from work and school and from spreading the virus to others
- Children under 9 who have never received a flu shot require two flu shots at least one month apart. This provides better long-term protection.

### Who should not get the flu shot?

- Infants under 6 months of age
- Those with a life-threatening allergy to eggs or egg products
- Anyone who has had a severe reaction to a previous dose of flu vaccine
- Anyone with a severe allergy to a component of the vaccine (thimerosal, formaldehyde, neomycin)
- Anyone who has an active neurological disorder should postpone vaccination until their condition has stabilized
- Persons who experienced Oculo-respiratory Syndrome (ORS) with severe **lower** respiratory symptoms (wheeze, chest tightness, difficulty breathing) within 24 hours of a past flu shot and/or people who had previous Oculorespiratory

Syndrome that required hospitalization.

- Those who developed Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) within 8 weeks of a past flu shot
- A person who is sick with a fever should wait until they recover before getting the flu vaccine.

### What are the risks from the flu shot?

Most people who get the flu shot have either no side effects or mild side effects, such as soreness, redness, or swelling where the shot was given. You might also notice fever, fatigue, and muscle aches within six to 12 hours after your shot, and these effects may last a day or two. The vaccine is not live, so you cannot get the flu from the flu shot.

A vaccine, like any medicine, can cause serious problems such as severe allergic reactions within a few minutes to a few hours after the shot. The risk of the flu vaccine causing serious harm is extremely small.

### Is the flu vaccine effective?

It takes about two weeks after the flu vaccine to develop antibodies against the flu. The effectiveness varies

depending on the age and health status of the person and how well the vaccine strains match the flu strains that are circulating in the community.

### When should I seek medical attention?

Call your doctor or go to the nearest hospital if you have any of these symptoms after you receive the vaccine: high fever, skin rash, itchiness, hives, swelling of the lips, tongue or face, difficulty breathing, severe dizziness, fits or convulsions, and/or other serious reactions to the vaccine. Advise the health care provider that you had a flu shot.

NAME
DATE RECEIVED FLU VACCINE

**For more information**, call Health Line at 519-271-7600 ext 267. Listowel area call 1-877-271-7348 ext 267. Visit our web site at [www.pdhu.on.ca](http://www.pdhu.on.ca).

## FOR NURSE'S USE ONLY:

VACCINE	DOSE	SITE & ROUTE	LOT NUMBER	DATE GIVEN	GIVEN BY
Fluviral™ Vaxigrip™	0.25 ml 0.50 ml	R/L deltoid IM			

### For children aged 6 months up to 9 years of age:

Is this the child's first flu shot?  Yes  No

If yes, it is recommended that the child has a second flu shot in one month's time for better long-term protection.