



## **PROTECTION FROM INFLUENZA 2011-2012**

### **IT'S A FACT: INFLUENZA IS MUCH MORE THAN A BAD COLD**

Commonly known as “the flu” - its real name is influenza, an infection caused by the influenza virus. Influenza is easily caught and easily spread, usually during the winter months. The symptoms, although cold-like, are far more serious and include headache, chills and a dry cough followed by body aches and fever. The fever may decrease on the second or third day but full recovery from influenza may take a few weeks.

### **INFLUENZA CAN LEAD TO SEVERE COMPLICATIONS EACH YEAR**

While most people recover fully, influenza may lead to more severe and life-threatening illnesses, such as pneumonia and even death.

### **IMMUNIZATION IS THE BEST PREVENTION**

Good nutrition and exercise contribute to your general health; these alone will not protect you from the influenza virus. Immunization every fall is the only prevention measure that has been proven to prevent influenza and reduce complications caused by influenza. In 2011, the vaccine will provide protection from the three prominent types of influenza.

### **HAND WASHING MAKES A DIFFERENCE**

Clean, Cover, and Contain is always a good message to help prevent disease. Clean your hands cover your coughs and sneezes and contain your illness by staying home to rest.

### **WHO SHOULD GET THE INFLUENZA VACCINE?**

Individuals at increased risk of complications should get the influenza vaccine every fall. This includes children age 6 to 23 months, all persons age 60 years and over, people with chronic conditions requiring doctor's care, those in residential care, health care workers, and household contacts of people at high risk of influenza complications, pregnant women - particularly those in their last trimester, essential services workers, Aboriginal people, and poultry workers. If you are not sure if you are eligible ask your community/public health nurse.

### **WHO SHOULD NOT GET THE INFLUENZA VACCINE?**

People with acute illness or anaphylactic allergy to eggs should not get the flu vaccine. Those with mild allergy or sensitivity to eggs can be immunized. If you have allergies or if you are sick let the community/public health nurse know before you get the vaccine.

### **ARE THERE SIDE EFFECTS FROM INFLUENZA VACCINE?**

The flu shot is very safe. Some people get a sore arm (redness, swelling and tenderness), others may have a fever, headache or muscle aches but these are mild and only last a day or two. Severe side effects and allergic reactions are rare. If you have other side effects, let your community/public health nurse know. You will be asked to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after you receive the influenza vaccine for observation.

**September 2011**

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION AND SERVICES, CONTACT THE  
REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY IN YOUR AREA.**