**PROTECTION FROM INFLUENZA**

**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. The vaccine will provide protection from 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?**
The Newfoundland and Labrador immunization program recommends and provides influenza vaccine for all persons 6 months of age and older; influenza vaccine is especially important for people who are at risk of developing complications from influenza. It is also important to immunize people who are able to spread influenza to those who are at higher risk of influenza–related complications such as health care providers and other caregivers. Some of the high risk groups include people with chronic conditions requiring doctor’s care, persons who are morbidly obese, those in residential care, children age 6 to 59 months, persons age 60 years and over, pregnant women, Aboriginal people, health care workers, household contacts of people at high risk of influenza complications, essential services workers and poultry and swine workers.

**WHO SHOULD NOT GET THE INFLUENZA VACCINE?**
People with acute illness with or without fever should not get the flu vaccine; immunization is postponed until the person is feeling well. People who have an allergy to any ingredient in the influenza vaccine or who have had an allergic reaction to a previous influenza vaccine should consult their health care provider to determine whether or not they should receive the influenza vaccine.

**ARE THERE SIDE EFFECTS FROM INFLUENZA VACCINE?**
All influenza vaccines are very safe. People who receive an injection may 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. Persons receiving the intranasal vaccine in addition to headache and fever may have reduced appetite, runny/stuffy nose and fatigue. 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.

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For additional information and services contact your Regional Health Authority listed in the gray pages of your telephone book.