

EXPERT OPINION on the flu shot

“Immunization (the flu shot) is the most effective means to reduce the impact of influenza.”

— *National Advisory
Committee on Immunization*

“Last year’s flu shot won’t protect you this year, so getting immunized each year should be a part of everyone’s regular winter routine. Influenza is serious and contagious but it is also preventable. The vaccines are safe and getting a flu shot now can mean a healthier and happier winter for you and your family.”

— *Ontario Chief Medical Officer
of Health, Sheela Basrur, MD*

Where can you get more information?

For more information contact:

- ▶ Your family doctor or nurse practitioner
- ▶ Your local Public Health Unit
- ▶ Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Flu Line:
 - 1-866-358-6968
 - TTY# 1-800-387-5559

And use the Internet:

- ▶ Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care: www.gov.on.ca/health
- ▶ Health Canada: www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/iyh/diseases/flu.html
- ▶ Canadian Coalition for Immunization Awareness and Promotion: www.immunize.cpha.ca



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- Primary Health Care Transition Fund
- Homewood Research Institute, Guelph, ON
- Department of Health Studies and Gerontology
University of Waterloo, Waterloo, ON
www.ideas.uwaterloo.ca/interRAI

Stay Healthy!

Get Your Flu Shot



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What is the flu?

Influenza or the flu is an infection caused by a virus. Flu symptoms include headaches, chills and a cough, followed by a fever. Also, loss of appetite, muscle aches, fatigue, runny nose, sneezing, watery eyes, and a sore throat are common symptoms of the flu. Most people who get the flu do not get seriously ill and they usually recover completely. However, frail older persons and others with weakened immune systems may need hospital care, and some may die from complications.

Why should you get the flu shot?

The flu spreads easily from one person to another through coughing or sneezing. The flu virus is also spread through touch, and it can be found on surfaces touched by people who have the flu.



For example, you can become infected by rubbing your eyes, nose or mouth after shaking hands with someone with the flu or touching a door knob they touched.

Everyone is at risk of getting the flu. People who are more likely to get the flu include very young children, people over 65 years of age, and people with serious health problems.

What is the truth about flu shots?

- ▶ The flu shot protects you from getting the flu. It can reduce your chances of getting the flu by 70 per cent. It also reduces the severity of symptoms if you do get the flu.
- ▶ You cannot get the flu from the flu shot.
- ▶ You need to get the flu shot every year.
- ▶ The flu shot might make your arm sore, but it does not usually interfere with normal activities.
- ▶ If you are allergic to eggs, talk to your doctor before getting the flu shot.
- ▶ Flu shots are free to everyone in Ontario.