

**What is Influenza?** Influenza –more commonly known as the Flu– is a serious infectious disease caused by the Influenza virus, which affects the respiratory pathways (nose, throat, lungs.).

Influenza is a regular and seasonal illness affecting thousands of Canadians every year. The duration of the Flu season can vary, but it generally extends from the end of fall to the start of spring.

At the present time when the new Coronavirus is still rampant, it’s more important than ever to protect yourself against the seasonal Flu. The Flu is a serious and contagious disease which merits your attention.

Persons infected by the Flu virus can be contagious even many days after the start of symptoms, so it’s very important that you avoid direct contact with others, and especially with persons most at risk of developing complications connected with this type of infection, such as the elderly or those with a weakened immune system.

You can protect yourself against the seasonal Flu by getting vaccinated. The Flu vaccination program is available throughout Canada. In Quebec, the Health and Social Services Department targets the most vulnerable populations with its Flu Vaccination Program: persons 75 years old and over, pregnant women in their 2nd and 3rd trimester and anyone more than 6 months old affected by a chronic illness. The vaccine is free for such persons as well as their close relatives who reside in the same dwelling. Similar measures are also applicable in other provinces. So, get vaccinated! It’s the first and most important thing that you should do to protect yourself against the Flu. The various types of the Flu virus which propagate and are at the origin of Flu epidemics are evolving year by year; which is why it is necessary to be vaccinated against the Flu every year.

As with COVID-19, certain hygienic measures help to reduce the risk of transmitting the Flu; to wit:

* Washing your hands regularly with soap and water or using an alcohol-based disinfectant;
* Covering your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough, on a handkerchief or into your elbow rather than on your hand;
* Cleaning all common area surfaces with a disinfectant;
* Staying at home if you have Flu symptoms; and always covering you face with a mask or face covering if you must go out.

Don’t wait any longer! Find out about the schedule of vaccinations available at your region’s healthcare centres, which usually start in November each year. You must first call or go online to make an appointment at a vaccination clinic in your region.

Also, spread the word among your family, friends and acquaintances so they can also get vaccinated. And most of all don’t forget to consult your doctor, your nurse or your pharmacist as soon as possible.

At ACCÉSSS, we believe in the prevention of avoidable illnesses!

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