



## **Influenza vaccine**

This is a reminder from Central KW Family Health that the influenza (flu) season is approaching. Influenza is a respiratory virus that causes a pneumonia of which symptoms include fever, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, headaches and muscle pains. Every year there are a few strains of the virus that are circulating.

For most people the symptoms are mild and are managed conservatively. However, in the elderly, immunocompromised and young infants the influenza virus can cause significant illness that can lead to hospitalization and even death.

As a result, to protect yourself and family members around you, we recommend obtaining a flu vaccine this year. The flu vaccine is safe with some common side effects including fever and muscle pains as well as local side effects such as arm pain, redness and swelling. As the flu vaccine is not a live virus vaccine you CANNOT get sick with the flu from the vaccine. The vaccine is safe to be given to anyone over 6 months of age as a one-time dose. For those people under 9 years of age who have never had a flu vaccine before, it is advised they receive 2 doses one month apart for optimal protection. Other measures you can take to protect yourself and others is masking, hand washing and isolating if you do become sick.

We receive a limited supply of flu vaccine from public health and as a result try to prioritize administering the vaccine to people over 65 years of age and those under 2 years of age. Everyone else can receive a flu vaccine at your local pharmacy. The only contraindications to a flu vaccine are a history of an allergic reaction to a flu vaccine or developing Guillain-Barre syndrome after receiving the flu vaccine. People allergic to eggs are able to receive the flu vaccine.

For more information on the flu vaccine and where you can get it visit:  
<https://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/health-and-wellness/flu.aspx>

A message on behalf of Central KW Family Health as we remain,  
a central part of your health.