

News Release

October 27, 2017

Toronto Public Health's free flu vaccine clinics begin today

Toronto residents can reduce their risk of getting sick with the flu by attending one of Toronto Public Health's free flu vaccine clinics offered from October 27 to November 17 at five locations across the city. The flu vaccine is also available in doctors' offices and at more than 600 Toronto pharmacies.

"The flu season runs from late fall to early spring and affects thousands of Torontonians each year," said Dr. Eileen de Villa, Toronto's Medical Officer of Health. "Making sure you get your annual flu vaccine is the best and most effective way to protect yourself and others. Getting the vaccine reduces your risk of getting the flu, and is especially important for those who are most vulnerable to the effects of getting sick."

Frequent handwashing or using an alcohol-based hand rub, sneezing or coughing into your sleeve, avoiding touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unclean hands, and staying home when you are sick are also effective ways of helping to reduce the spread of the flu.

Even before symptoms appear, the flu can be spread from person to person by small droplets produced by a cough or sneeze or by contact with contaminated hands or objects. Typical symptoms include sudden onset of high fever, chills, sore throat, cough and muscle aches. Other common symptoms include headache, loss of appetite, feeling tired and a sore throat. Nausea, vomiting and diarrhea may occur, especially in children.

While most people will recover from the flu within a week to 10 days, the flu can make pre-existing medical conditions such as asthma and heart disease worse, develop into serious health problems such as pneumonia, and in rare circumstances can prove fatal.

Certain groups are at higher risk for developing complications from the flu and should ensure they get the flu vaccine each year. They include people with chronic health conditions, residents of nursing homes and other chronic care facilities, people 65 years of age and older, children six months to five years of age, pregnant women and Indigenous people.

The flu vaccine is free for people six months of age and older who live, work or attend school in Ontario. Children and youth between the ages of two and 17 years can get the flu vaccine as either an injection or nasal spray. No health card is required for vaccination.

The full flu vaccination clinic schedule is available at 416-338-7600 or <http://www.bit.ly/2yA0R3t>. Individuals can also book an appointment online at <http://www.tphbookings.ca> and follow @TOPublicHealth and #FluFighter on Twitter.

Toronto is Canada's largest city, the fourth largest in North America, and home to a diverse population of about 2.8 million people. It is a global centre for business, finance, arts and culture and is consistently ranked one of the world's most livable cities. In 2017, Toronto is honouring Canada's 150th birthday with "TO Canada with Love," a year-long program of celebrations, commemorations and exhibitions. For information on non-emergency City services and programs, Toronto residents, businesses and visitors can visit <http://www.toronto.ca>, call 311, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, or follow us on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/TorontoComms> and on Instagram at <http://www.instagram.com/cityofto>.

- 30 -

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