



# Heartland Health Region

Healthy People, Healthy Communities, and Service Excellence in an Enduring Health System



For Immediate Release  
Date: October 31, 2017

## Protecting Yourself and Everyone Around You from Influenza

Immunizations are the best way to protect yourself, your family, and those around you from influenza. The Heartland Health Region began its seasonal influenza immunization campaign with the first clinics of the season starting on October 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Vaccine is once again available to all Saskatchewan residents at no cost. This year, the public influenza vaccination program will be providing only the injectable vaccine. There will be no free nasal mist. Recommendations from both the Canadian and American immunization advisory committees, based on recent studies, are that the injectable vaccine is more effective. The injectable vaccine available this year has four strains in it, two against the A strain influenzas and two against the B strain influenzas.

Any person can attend any of the available public clinics to receive their immunization. Several clinics will be offered in a number of communities throughout the region and many of these clinics offer evening hours for those unable to attend a clinic during regular business hours. Selected pharmacies will also be providing flu vaccine to those 9 years and older and select physician offices will also provide vaccine. These additional options provide increased access, choice and convenience for residents. Please speak with your physician, nurse practitioner, or pharmacist to inquire about their offering of influenza immunizations.

Everyone 6 months of age and older is encouraged to receive their seasonal influenza vaccination.

"Influenza is more serious than the common cold and can cause significant illness, even death, especially in more vulnerable populations. A number of people get seriously ill every flu season each year due to influenza. We are strongly urging the public to get immunized and help minimize illness and complications in our communities," commented Dr. David Torr, Medical Health Officer for the health region.

"Vaccine is safe, effective, and protective and very rarely causes any complications. Getting the vaccine not only protects you from serious illness if exposed, but also protects those around you. I strongly encourage everyone to get their annual influenza immunization and to encourage family, friends, and other members of the community to do the same – it is free and available to all," added Torr.

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High risk groups for influenza include adults and children with chronic health conditions, residents of nursing homes and long term care facilities, seniors, pregnant women, and children younger than five years but older than six months of age. Health care workers and child care providers are also strongly advised to get immunized.

For more information regarding the dates and locations of the 2017 seasonal influenza immunization clinics in your community and participating pharmacies please check out our website <http://hrha.sk.ca/programs-services/public-health-immunizations> You can also like us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter for the latest Influenza information and available clinics, @heartlandhr is our Twitter tagline. You may also speak to your family physician or call the provincial HealthLine at 8-1-1.

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