

Health

Public Health and Primary Health Care Division
Communicable Disease Control Branch
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August 30, 2011

Dear Colleague:

Re: 2011-2012 'Get the Shot Not the Flu' Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Program

The seasonal trivalent vaccine for 2011-2012 provides active immunization against the same three influenza strains as last year. It is important, however, for everyone to get the flu shot every year because the protection provided by the vaccine decreases over time.

The seasonal flu vaccine is available to all Manitobans at no charge; however, immunization is especially important for those at increased risk of serious illness from the flu, their caregivers and close contacts. This includes:

- Seniors aged 65 or older
- Residents of personal care homes or long-term care facilities
- Children six months to four years of age
- Those with chronic illness such as:
 - Long-term aspirin therapy
 - An immune system weakened by disease or medical treatment
 - A condition that makes it difficult to breathe
 - Children on long-term aspirin therapy
 - Other chronic medical conditions (e.g. diabetes, mental disabilities)
- Pregnant women
- Health care workers and first responders
- Individuals of Aboriginal ancestry
- People who are severely overweight or obese
- Or as determined by your primary health care provider

Vaccine Orders:

- Orders for the influenza vaccine can now be placed by completing the order form available at the following link: www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/protocol/vaccinebiologics.pdf. Orders will be shipped once product arrives in Manitoba. Please indicate the dates of your clinics, if applicable, in the comments area of the order form to ensure timely delivery.
- All personal care homes and hospitals should place their orders as soon as possible.
- The majority of Manitoba's influenza vaccine will consist of Fluviral® in 10-dose multi-dose vials and a very small amount of Thimerosal-free Agriflu® in single-dose pre-filled syringes. Due to limited quantity of Agriflu, only a small quantity will be released to immunization providers at a time and orders may require approval of Manitoba Health.
- The use of Agriflu® should be reserved for those who have a known or suspected allergy to Thimerosal and for those individuals who would otherwise decline immunization if only a Thimerosal containing vaccine (Fluviral®) were offered.

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Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Vaccine (Pneu-P-23): This vaccine is available at no charge to all Manitobans age 65 or older and those at most risk for invasive pneumococcal disease, including homeless individuals and illicit-drug users. For specific Manitoba Health eligibility criteria, visit www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/vaccineeligibility.html. *Routine re-immunization is NOT recommended.* Please refer to the product monograph and/or the *Canadian Immunization Guide* (2006) for detailed information.


Resources: Updated resources (including fact sheets, posters and brochures) are now available online and can also be ordered through the Material Distribution Agency (MDA) accessed at the following link: <http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/flu>.

Please share this communication with all colleagues in your facility or clinic.

Please note that no media interviews or media releases are to occur until after Manitoba Health announces the commencement of the flu campaign.

As the prevention, management and control of communicable diseases requires the active participation and cooperation of all health care providers, your attention to this important information is most appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kathleen Messner". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a thin vertical line.

Kathleen Messner
A/Director, Communicable Disease Control