



## SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER



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### Annual Flu Vaccine

By Claire Pitcher, Registered Nurse

It's already that time of year again! Flu vaccine time! It is very important for people to get their flu vaccine every year for a number of reasons – some of which we'll talk about in this month's newsletter! It's also important to remember that, although many of us may get the flu and recover within a few days or weeks, thousands of Canadians are hospitalized and die each year from the flu. And, as is the case with all vaccine preventable infections, getting the vaccines helps to protect yourself and others!

**Where does the word 'Flu' come from? And what does it mean?** The word "flu" is a shortened version of the longer more scientific term "influenza". Influenza in the name given to several different types of viruses. When we talk about "getting the flu vaccine", we're speaking specifically about seasonal influenza. It's important to distinguish that since there are many different types of the flu!

**If there are so many different types of the flu, why do I need just one vaccine to protect against it?** The annual flu vaccine actually protects against three to four different types of the flu. So, it's like getting one shot...but triple or quadruple the protection!

**If the flu vaccine protects against multiple strains of the flu, who decides which strains are included in the vaccine?** Each year, the World Health Organization (WHO) partners with scientists from across the globe to predict which strains of the flu are expected to be more prevalent in the upcoming flu season. This information is shared with vaccine manufacturers and others who are involved in ensuring there is sufficient supply of the vaccine ready in time for the start of flu season.



### Contest of the Month

- 1) The annual flu vaccines protect against 1 type of influenza **True or False**
- 2) The World Health Organization determines which strains of influenza should be included in the vaccine each year  
**True or False**
- 3) People only need the flu vaccine one time in their life  
**True or False**

**Email us** your answer and you will be entered to win a \$10 iTunes of Starbucks gift certificate!

**If I got my flu vaccine last year, do I really need to get it again this year?** The short answer to this question is: yes!! Because the strains may change from one year to the next, the vaccine is designed to offer protection against the flu for just one flu season. For example, the 2017/2018 flu vaccine protects against the A/Michigan/45/2015 (H1N1)pdm09-like viral strain which was not in the previous year's vaccine. It's also important to get your flu vaccine as soon as possible after they become available to decrease your chances of getting sick!

**If I'm healthy and have never gotten the flu, should I still get the vaccine?** Generally the answer to this question is: YES! Although very rarely some people have specific health conditions that prevent them from being able to get the vaccine, in most cases, everyone is encouraged to get the flu vaccine. In fact, the vaccine is even provided free of charge to people at high risk of developing complications from the flu. Even if you have never gotten the flu in the past, the best way to continue to protect your health is to get the vaccine this year. Also, by getting the vaccine, you're helping to protect others in the community who can't get the vaccine because – the more people who are vaccinated, the less likely it is for there to be outbreaks of the flu!

If you have any questions at all about the flu or the vaccine, please contact your local doctor, nurse or public health unit for more information. You can also visit this great website: [www.canada.ca/flu](http://www.canada.ca/flu)

**Congratulations Breanne!**  
**She was our last**  
**Contest Winner!!**

We sent her a  
Chapters Gift card!



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