

Wellness Articles

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Immunization and the holidays

This holiday season, Alberta Health Services (AHS) reminds Albertans to stay safe and protect themselves during respiratory virus season. The circulation of respiratory viruses is normally highest in the fall and winter. One of the best ways to do that is getting the influenza and COVID-19 vaccines.

AHS continues to offer influenza and COVID-19 vaccines, free of charge, to all Albertans six months of age and older.

Why immunize?

When you get immunized or get a vaccine, it starts your body's natural immune response to a disease. Your body begins to make antibodies that protect you against the disease before you have contact with it. This is the process of becoming immunized or building immunity.

Without a vaccine, your body likely does not have the antibodies to fight many of the diseases that vaccines can prevent. This means you and your family could get very sick.

Getting immunized lets you build immunity against disease before being exposed to it. Immunization helps your body fight the disease faster and can prevent you from getting the disease. It also helps prevent diseases from spreading to others.

Who can get immunized?

AHS offers immunization through public health clinics to:

- Children six months of age to under five years of age and their family and household members.
- Individuals who do not have a provincial healthcare number.
- Individuals who live in a community where there are no other immunizing healthcare providers.
- Individuals with booked appointments for other immunizations.

Albertans can also get immunized at:

- Local pharmacies. Available for Albertans five years of age and older. Check to confirm vaccine availability.



- Doctors' offices. Some doctors are offering influenza and COVID-19 immunizations. Check to confirm vaccine availability.

Spread joy, not germs

There are several ways you can prevent getting sick over the holidays including:

- Washing your hands with warm water and soap or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer often.
- Covering your cough or sneeze into your arm or a tissue, not your hand.
- Staying home or away from holiday gatherings when you are sick.

When you and your family get immunized with a vaccine, you're protecting yourselves and helping to build your community's protection against diseases. To learn more and to book an appointment, visit ahs.ca/vaccine, call 811, or text 'flu' or 'COVID' to 88111.