

News Release

Be Prepared for the Flu and Pneumonia Season: Lung Association Advises New Brunswickers to Get Immunizations

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FREDERICTON, NB, October 20, 2011 – It's that time of year. Just as it is time to get your garden and car ready for winter, so too should you get your immune system ready to protect you from serious respiratory tract infections. The New Brunswick Lung Association is advising everyone over the age of 6 months to get the influenza vaccine, unless you have been specifically told by your doctor that you should not get the vaccine. People over 65 should also get a pneumonia vaccine.

This year's flu vaccine is a mix of A (H1N1) similar to the H1N1 pandemic virus of 2009, a B component unchanged from last year, and a new A (H3N2) component. According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, it is especially important for certain groups of people to get immunized: those at high risk of complications, those living or working with individuals at high risk, and those who provide essential community services. People at risk of complications include those with chronic diseases (such as diabetes, COPD, cancer, and cardiovascular disease), the morbidly obese, those living in nursing homes, people over 65, healthy children aged 6 months to 4 years, healthy pregnant women, and aboriginal peoples.

“We also want to make sure that people are aware of the importance of getting a pneumonia vaccine, especially people over 65 and for people with chronic respiratory diseases,” said Barbara MacKinnon, President and CEO of the New Brunswick Lung Association. Pneumococcal Disease causes a growing burden of disease in adults in Canada and ranks first in terms of death due to infectious disease (Ontario Burden of Infectious Disease Study). Certain types of pneumonia have high morbidity and mortality rates and the number of people infected in Canada is rising, due to our growing population over 50.

“Getting a vaccine will help to reduce your chance of getting a serious respiratory infection this winter and will help to keep costs to our health care system down as well,” added Barbara MacKinnon. “When it comes to health, a few dollars for prevention save thousands of dollars worth of cure.”

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