



News Release: Pharmacists Encourage all Residents to Get a Flu Shot

October 19, 2020 St. John's All residents of the province age five and older can now receive their flu shot in a community pharmacy for free. The Pharmacists' Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (PANL) is reminding everyone of the importance of getting vaccinated against influenza.

"The flu is a serious and contagious respiratory condition that can cause mild to severe illnesses and at times, could lead to death," said Janice Audeau, community pharmacist and PANL President. "The best way to prevent the flu is by getting a flu shot each year."

While getting an annual flu shot is always important, due to COVID-19, this year it is more important than ever to get vaccinated against influenza.

"While the flu shot won't protect you from COVID-19, it's important to protect yourself from influenza," added Audeau. "Further, if you have the flu, it is going to make you more vulnerable to a harsher attack of COVID-19, which will complicate your treatment. It is also very difficult to differentiate between the flu and COVID-19. The symptoms are very similar - headache, cough, muscle aches and fatigue - so getting the flu vaccine could also help reduce unnecessary COVID-19 testing."

Due to public health directives related to COVID-19, getting a flu shot in a pharmacy will look different than in past years. The biggest change is that everyone age five and older can receive a pharmacist-delivered flu shot at no charge. In addition, restrictions related to physical distancing, limits on the number of people that can be in the pharmacy waiting area and in the pharmacy itself, as well as enhanced cleaning protocols between patients, may require individuals to make an appointment in advance.

"Any changes you see in a pharmacy during this year's flu season are to ensure vaccinations are delivered in the safest manner possible for all patients and staff. Residents are asked to call their local pharmacy in advance to see if an appointment is necessary."

"With more than 200 community pharmacies across the province, many open evenings and weekends, pharmacists are ideally situated to help government meet their goal vaccination rate of 85% of the population.," said Audeau. "Pharmacists play an important role in the delivery of health care services to residents of Newfoundland and Labrador, and this is another convenient and valuable service they can offer their patients."

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