

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

INFLUENZA: EVERYONE'S CONCERN!

FREE VACCINATION AGAINST SEASONAL INFLUENZA FOR ALL NUNAVIMMIUT

Kuujuuaq, October 29, 2015 – Once again influenza season is knocking at our door and the Department of Public Health of the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS) wants you to get protected! As is the case every year, vaccination is offered free of charge to the entire Nunavik population. The vaccination campaign against seasonal flu (influenza) will begin November 1st and will continue until the end of flu season.

Influenza (flu) is a highly contagious infection of the respiratory tract that can be transmitted even before you start showing signs of infection, it can cause serious complications; it may lead to hospitalization or even death. It is spread when an infected individual sneezes, coughs or speaks in the vicinity of other persons or through contact with objects contaminated with the virus, such as doors handles, toys, utensils or unwashed hands.

Influenza can seriously affect you **even if you are in good health**. Some of its symptoms are fever, fatigue, muscle pain, cough and headaches. In Nunavik, the vaccination is offered to the entire population aged six months or older, regardless of gender or medical condition. Influenza can cause serious complications among the most vulnerable individuals, such as:

- Persons aged 60 years or older;
- Children in good health aged 6 to 23 months;
- Persons aged six months or older suffering from a chronic disease such as respiratory problems, diabetes or cardiac problems;
- Residents of extended-care centres (elders' centre);
- Pregnant women starting at 13 weeks of pregnancy.

You can protect yourself and your loved ones against influenza and its complications by getting vaccinated. The flu vaccine's effectiveness reaches its peak roughly two weeks after administration and its protection lasts from 6 to 12 months. The vaccine is also the best way of avoiding the transmission of influenza to the individuals most at risk. "Contrary to what some people believe the influenza vaccine does not give you the flu. The injection consists of particles of the dead virus, which send a signal to the immune system to produce antibodies that will then prevent flu infection," explained Dr. Serge Déry, Nunavik Director of Public Health.

For individuals aged 2 to 17 years: a vaccine without needles

An influenza vaccine is available for young persons of Nunavik aged 2 to 17 years: Flumist, a vaccine that is sprayed into the nose. No needle is used. The youth receives a spray in each nostril and the process is complete. He or she is then adequately protected.

Individuals at high risk of spreading influenza: don't spread, get vaccinated!

- Health workers (employees of the health centres, CLSCs and residential centres as well as first responders);
- Persons living with one or more persons at high risk of complications;
- Workers of day-cares and the academic sector;
- Workers of essential services (police officers, pilots, flight attendants).

To receive the influenza vaccine, consult your CLSC for the vaccination schedule.

For further information, please do not hesitate to consult a health professional at your CLSC.

Nunavik Villages and CLSC Telephone Numbers

Akulivik	819 496-9090
Aupaluk	819 491-9090
Inukjuak	819 254-9090
Ivujivik	819 922-9090
Kangiqsualujjuaq	819 337-9090
Kangiqsujuaq	819 338-9090
Kangirsuk	819 935-9090
Kuujjuaq	819 964-2905
Kuujjuaraapik	819 929-9090
Puvirnituq	819 988-2957
Quaqtaq	819 492-9090

Salluit 819 255-9090

Tasiujaq 819 633-9090

Umiujaq 819 331-9090

*The NRBHSS is a public agency created in 1978 under the **James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement**. It is responsible for nearly the entire Québec territory located north of the 55th parallel in terms of the provision of health and social services for the inhabitants of the 14 communities.*

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Source: Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services
Department of Public Health

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