

Important Notice to Staff About Influenza and COVID-19

Why is it important to receive a complete COVID-19 immunization series (including any recommended boosters)?

We all must do our part to protect one another. Immunization is the single most effective means of protecting yourself, your loved ones and the greater community from COVID-19. Without immunization, Albertans are at risk of developing severe illness and even death from this virus. Vaccines strengthen your immune system by building antibodies to help prevent diseases. Immunization is safe. It is still recommended to get the vaccine even if you were previously infected.

Why is it important for you to be immunized with influenza vaccine every year?

Getting immunized against influenza every year is the most effective way to prevent the spread and to protect against infection from these changing influenza viruses. Healthcare workers (HCWs) have a unique responsibility to protect their own health as well as the wellbeing of those around them who may be at risk. Other reasons to get immunized include:

- 1) HCWs are at a higher risk of exposure to influenza than adults in non-healthcare work settings;
- 2) HCWs may transmit influenza to vulnerable patients, and their own family and friends; and
- 3) Immunized HCWs decrease risk of illness, serious outcomes and even death for themselves and others.

If you do not get immunized and an influenza outbreak occurs, what happens?

In the event of an influenza outbreak at your site, the North Zone Medical Officer of Health may make recommendations that will impact unimmunized staff members. **This may include being excluded from work or starting a prescription antiviral medication called Oseltamivir for the duration of the outbreak.** Depending on employer/employee health insurance arrangements, you may be required to pay for the antiviral.

For more information, please speak with your manager or call Health Link Alberta at 811.

Visit AHS websites: COVID-19 information - <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/covid19>
Influenza information - <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/influenza>

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.