



Department of  
Health

**HEALTH CARE WORKER (HCW)  
INFLUENZA IMMUNIZATION  
FACT SHEET**

- \$ **Influenza immunization is the single most important way to prevent influenza.**
- \$ **When HCWs get immunized against influenza, they protect themselves, their families and the patients/residents in their care.**
- \$ **HCWs infected with influenza can spread it to their patients/residents, causing illness, hospitalization and even death even if the HCW him or herself doesn't feel very ill.**
- \$ **Studies in long-term care facilities show that immunizing HCWs significantly lowers the risk of death and hospitalization for the residents.** In fact, HCW immunization is still important even when most residents are immunized. This is because elderly, frail people have a weaker response to the vaccine than HCWs.
- \$ **Studies show up to 70% reduction in work days lost because of respiratory illness in employees who receive influenza vaccine.** There is a savings of about \$39.23 (Cdn) per vaccinated HCW.
- \$ **Influenza immunization is very safe:**
  1. The only vaccine used in Nova Scotia is a split virus vaccine. This vaccine causes no side effects in most people.
  1. Influenza immunization CANNOT cause influenza, because the vaccine does not contain live virus.

2. Arm redness and soreness occur in about 1/3 of people, but they are generally mild and short-lasting and can be reduced by taking plain acetaminophen at the time of immunization and every four hours after for a total of four doses.
2. Less than 2% of recipients of influenza vaccine will experience flu-like symptoms 24 to 48 hours after their vaccination.
3. Annual influenza immunization has not been shown to cause any long term health problems

**Have you done all you can to protect yourself, your family and your patients?**