

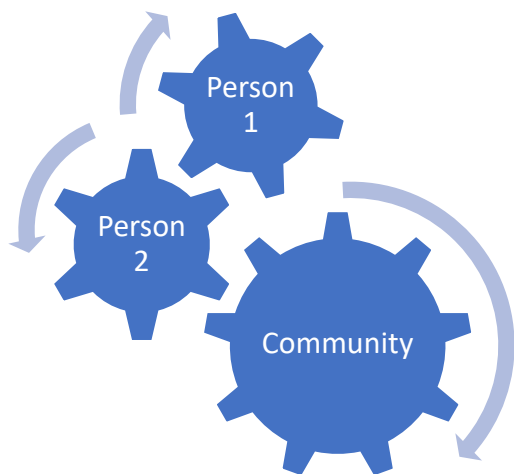
CELEBRATE IMMUNIZATION WEEK 2024

Immunization Week 2024

This year Canada celebrates Immunization from April 22 to 30. The theme this year is “Let’s Catch Up With Confidence”. The focus is on getting or staying up to date with routine and recommended immunizations – good protection against harmful diseases and stay healthy.

Vaccine History

In the 1600’s, Buddhist monks in China would suck out venom from poisonous snakes to become immune from their bites. In 1721, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu brought smallpox inoculation to Europe asking for her daughters to be given a vaccine derived from cowpox. She had seen this done in Turkey and wanted protection for her children. Over the next centuries, other vaccines were developed and refined to aid in helping to prevent over 20 diseases across the world and research continues today.



Infectious Diseases spread easily between people who are not protected – immunization enables contacts to be resistant to the virus or bacteria being communicated

Vaccination vs Immunization

There is a difference in the terminology of vaccination and immunization and they are not interchangeable. Vaccination is the literal action of getting the vaccine into the body, either through an injection, orally or by other means. Immunization covers the process of receiving the vaccine and developing immunity within the body to the disease the vaccine aims to prevent.

Seniors Immunization-For

seniors, Canada has identified 5 vaccines that are recommended to maintain immunization status for diseases that need attention through their life or need to be added since they affect senior’s health more adversely as they age – Shingles, Pneumonia, Influenza, DTP (Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis) and Covid 19. In Ontario the vaccines are free from the Ministry of Health for DTP, Influenza, Covid 19, Shingles (age 65-70 and 2nd dose must be given before 71st birthday), Pneumonia (age 65 and over). Some private health insurance plans partially or completely cover cost of the Shingles and Pneumonia vaccines. You need to consult your Health Care Provider or Pharmacist about your immunization needs.

Need for Flu Shot

There is a concern within Public Health officials about the number of seniors who are receiving their Flu Shot annually. The numbers are way too low.

Flu Season starts the end of Autumn and stretches into early Spring. Flu has the potential for serious illness even requiring acute hospitalization and possibly death. Seniors are more susceptible to flu without the immunization boosted on an annual basis. It is manufactured based on the most expected viruses circulating that winter.

Summary - Research and development is continuing to improve existing vaccines, find new ways to administer them, easier ways to store or eliminate storage requirements (refrigeration), find new vaccines, etc. Who knows what will be available in the future? Disease prevention is always better than having a disease that needs treatment and disease’s resulting consequences.

Looking Ahead

In the near future the USCO will be publishing a new brochure – “**Barriers to Immunization**”

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