

Health

Public Health and Primary Health Care Division
Communicable Disease Control
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January 18, 2013

Dear Health Care Provider:

Manitoba continues to experience high levels of influenza activity across the province due to the circulating influenza A (H3N2) strain.

Influenza epidemiology in Manitoba is updated weekly and can be found at the following link:
<http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/surveillance/reports.html>.

This year's influenza vaccines provide protection against the three influenza strains currently in circulation in Manitoba this flu season. Preliminary estimates of vaccine effectiveness in both Canada and the United States suggest that this year's influenza vaccines are moderately effective.

Providers are encouraged to continue to offer influenza vaccine to all Manitobans at no charge. An annual flu shot is especially important for those at increased risk of serious illness from the flu, their caregivers and close contacts. This includes:

- Seniors age 65 or older
- Residents of personal care homes or long-term care facilities
- Children age six months to five years
- Those with chronic illness
- Pregnant women
- Health care workers and first responders
- Individuals of Aboriginal ancestry
- People who are severely overweight or obese

Clinicians, who are seeing patients with influenza like illness (ILI) should emphasize the importance of hand hygiene, cough etiquette and exclusion from work or school when ill.

Clinicians considering the use of **antiviral medications for treatment of patients with influenza**, especially those at increased risk of complications from the flu, should refer to the most recent Association of Medical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases Canada guidelines for the use of antiviral drugs for influenza, available at: http://www.ammi.ca/media/48038/14791_aoki_final.pdf.pdf

Please share this information with all relevant colleagues in your facility or clinic.

Sincerely

"Original Signed By"

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