

# Immunization

## Background Information/Rationale for Focus

**Immunization: Protection for all ages.**

Immunizations are a key strategy in promoting health and protecting individuals and their community, including workplaces, from vaccine preventable diseases. Obtaining regular and up to date immunizations provides active protection from vaccine preventable diseases and their related complications. Annual influenza immunizations provide optimal protection. Employers and employees should consider yearly influenza immunization for healthy working adults to decrease absenteeism due to respiratory and other illnesses<sup>1</sup>.



**Don't forget: ADULTS need immunizations too!**

Immunizations that may be needed, include:

**Hepatitis A-** especially for: those who travel to countries lacking in good sanitation and clean water; street drug users; and, men who have sex with men.

**Hepatitis B-**especially for: health care workers; street drug users; people with multiple sexual partners; and those at risk of exposure in their occupation, lifestyle or environment.

**MMR** (mumps, measles & rubella): especially if you are a woman of childbearing years born after 1970, with no history of disease or previous immunization.

**Pneumococcal-**for pneumococcal infections (a single dose is recommended for persons over 65 years old).

**Tetanus/Diphtheria-**every ten years.

**Travel Immunizations-**consult your health care provider and/or Region of Waterloo Public Health International Travel Clinic (519-883-2007).

**Varicella** (chickenpox): especially if you are a woman of childbearing years with no history of disease or previous immunization.



## Goals For The Workplace To Strive For

1. To increase employee awareness of the benefits (and risks) of immunization against certain communicable diseases.
2. To decrease the number of sick day absences (related to communicable diseases, i.e. influenza) during susceptible periods of exposure.
3. To decrease transmission of disease to family members and close contacts (including co-workers).

## Getting Started

### Workplace Wellness Team, Environmental Scan and Needs Assessment

- Create a workplace wellness team, which includes employees and management to gauge your workers needs and interests;
- Complete an environmental scan to determine how supportive the workplace is regarding healthy eating and physical activity;
- Conduct a needs assessment to determine what healthy living initiatives are important to employees; and,
- Based on the results of your environmental scan and needs assessment, consult with the workplace wellness team to decide which interventions fit with the requirements of your workplace.

### Awareness Raising

- Utilize bulletin boards and displays to feature information promoting immunizations;
- Obtain immunization pamphlets from Region of Waterloo Public Health that identify the importance of immunizations, recommended schedule, side effects and available resources;
- Obtain information pamphlets from Region of Waterloo Public Health regarding infection control and transmission prevention (i.e. “cover your cough”, hand washing, etc.);
- Dedicate an area to display pamphlets and resources related to immunization;
- Promote immunization during the National Influenza Immunization Month in October; and,
- Include short articles in internal newsletter or staff emails.

### Skill Building

- Offer presentations/workshops based on employee interest through lunch and learn sessions discussing issues around immunizations and the importance of preventing illness (i.e. good hand washing, “cover your cough”); and,
- If applicable, coordinate training with Occupational Health Nurses regarding immunization clinics for employees (i.e. influenza immunization clinics).

## Creating a Supportive Environment

- Offer immunization clinics to increase employee compliance with immunizations;
- Provide financial assistance to cover cost of travel counseling and cost of immunizations for employees traveling for work purposes;
- Include in benefit package coverage for immunizations not publicly funded that are an additional cost to the employee;
- Maintain good hygiene policies, such as hand washing which can prevent the spread of communicable illnesses within the workplace;
- Coordinate information sessions in order to provide education about immunizations; and,
- Offer flexible hours/break time for employees to attend local immunization clinics or to attend appointments at their health care provider for immunizations.



Telephone consultation is available through **Project Health: 519-883-2287**

## Region of Waterloo Public Health Resources

### *Public Health Resource Centre:*

To borrow teaching kits/books/video resources please call: 519-883-2256

To order pamphlets: email [phrc@region.waterloo.on.ca](mailto:phrc@region.waterloo.on.ca) or call the automated order line at: 519-883-2374 or order online at [www.region.waterloo.on.ca/ph](http://www.region.waterloo.on.ca/ph) -- Resource Centre/Pamphlets

### Pamphlets/Fact Sheets:

Immunization: Protection for All Ages pamphlet\*

Influenza Vaccine brochure\*

Does your Child Have an Immunization Record?

Immunization Fact Sheets - various topics

(For a complete list of current pamphlets available through the Resource Centre, refer to online order form)

### Poster:

Adults Need Immunization Too (poster)

\*To download copies of these pamphlets and factsheets visit:

<http://www.projecthealth.ca/menu-services/pamphlets>

## Community Resources

Region of Waterloo Public Health Vaccine Information Line .....519-883-2006 ext 5273

Region of Waterloo Public Health International Travel Clinic .....519-883-2007

## Internet Resources

[www.projecthealth.ca](http://www.projecthealth.ca)

Canadian Coalition for Immunization Awareness & Promotion

<http://www.immunize.cpha.ca/en/default.aspx>

Canadian Immunization Guide

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/cig-gci/index.html>

Caring for Kids

<http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/immunization>

Immunization Action Coalition

<http://www.immunize.org>

Region of Waterloo Public Health: Immunization Website

<http://www.region.waterloo.on.ca/ph>

## References

- <sup>1</sup> National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI). (2008). Statement on influenza vaccination for the 2008-2009 season. *Canada Communicable Disease Report*, 34, 1-46.



**Project Health**

Supporting Healthy Workplaces