

# Health Care

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ROBERT H. CRANFIELD D.C.



Teaming up to beat the flu this year in local institutions are front (kneeling from left) Adrienne Brown, Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital; Patricia Carlton, Halton Healthcare Services Corporation. Front (standing, from left), Ann O'Hara, ParaMed Home Health Care; Susan Hall, Halton Healthcare Services Corporation; Helaine Ortmann, Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital; Kathy Blake and Peter Willmott, Halton Regional Health Department. Back (from left), Chris Jewell, Halton Catholic District School Board; Dawn Dunn, William Osler Health Centre (Georgetown); Mary Anne Carson and Mark Pagot, Health Department.

## Hospitals, school boards, businesses join forces against the flu

As we enter the flu season, the public and private sectors in Halton are joining forces to stop its spread.

Halton's four hospitals in Georgetown, Milton, Oakville and Burlington have mounted an aggressive campaign to immunize both hospital employees and patients.

"We also want to avoid last year's holiday emergency room scene," said Adrienne Brown, Infection Control Practitioner at Joseph Brant Hospital in Burlington.

At that time, Georgetown Hospital emergency department reported a 30 per cent increase in the number of patients requesting treatment for flu symptoms.

School boards are also keen to have staff and students protected from the flu. Kids in school and child care are

one of the main carriers of flu in the community and the most likely to bring it home.

Chris Jewell, administrator of Communications for the Halton Catholic District School Board, recalls that last year many students and staff were affected with the flu.

"Our board encourages staff, students and families to consider the vaccine available at the public flu clinics since it greatly lowers your chance of getting the flu," Jewell said.

Gary Sadler, superintendent with the Halton District School Board agrees. "We're really pleased the flu vaccine is available to everyone this year. We're hoping that all families will take advantage of the program," he said.

Both school boards have offered space to the Halton's Health Department to hold public flu shot clinics

## Halton health department begins free flu shot clinics for the public this month

Halton Region Health Department is offering free flu shots for everyone over the age of six months during November and December.

Influenza, commonly called the flu, is caused by a virus that can give people a cough, fever, headache and muscle aches. It usually lasts for five to 10 days, although the cough and weakness can last for up to several weeks. Since the viruses that cause the flu change every year, people need to get a new shot each year.

The provincial government is spending \$38 million this year so that every Ontarian can be vaccinated.

The vaccine protects 70-90 per cent of healthy adults and provides children with 70 per cent protection from fever caused by the flu. Those who do get sick with the

flu, will likely not become as sick as those without the vaccination.

The vaccination itself can cause side effects but the risk of causing serious harm is small. Most people who get the vaccine have either no side effects or mild side effects such as soreness, redness, or swelling where the shot was given.

Who should not get a flu shot?

- A child under the age of six months
- Anyone with serious allergy to eggs or egg products
- Anyone with severe allergy to any component of the vaccine such as thimerosal (a preservative), neomycin (an antibiotic) or gelatin
- Anyone with a serious reaction to a previous dose of the vaccine
- Anyone with a history of Guillain-Barre Syndrome

Residents can go to any of the following clinics; no appointments are necessary.

- **Tuesday, Nov. 28, 3-8 p.m.**, Georgetown High School
- **Tuesday, Dec. 5, 4:30-8 p.m.**, Bishop Reding Secondary School, 1600 Main St., Milton
- **Wednesday, Dec. 6, 3:30-8 p.m.**, St. Brigid Catholic School, 73 Miller Dr., Georgetown
- **Tuesday, Dec. 12, 4-8 p.m.**, Halton Regional Centre, 1151 Bronte Rd., Oakville
- **Tuesday, Dec. 12, 3-8 p.m.**, Acton High School, 21 Cedar Rd.
- **Wednesday, Dec. 20, 4-8 p.m.**, Brookville Public School, 1325 Guelph Line

For a listing of clinics in other parts of Halton and for more information about the program call Halton Regional Health Department's Flu Info Line at 878-8113 or 853-0501.

during November and December.

Meanwhile many businesses are hosting their own clinics, inviting community nurses to immunize their employees.

"The number of calls from businesses have really picked up in the last few weeks," said Ann O'Hara, ParaMed Home Health Care. "There's a lot of interest in workplace flu shot clinics."

Many employers in Halton are happy to cover the costs of nursing services in order to provide convenient on-site clinics for their staff, she said.

Wilma Kokoski, SEN Community Health Care, agrees noting that flu shots can reduce the absenteeism costs to businesses.

For more information about the flu program call the Flu Info Line at 878-8113 or 853-0501.



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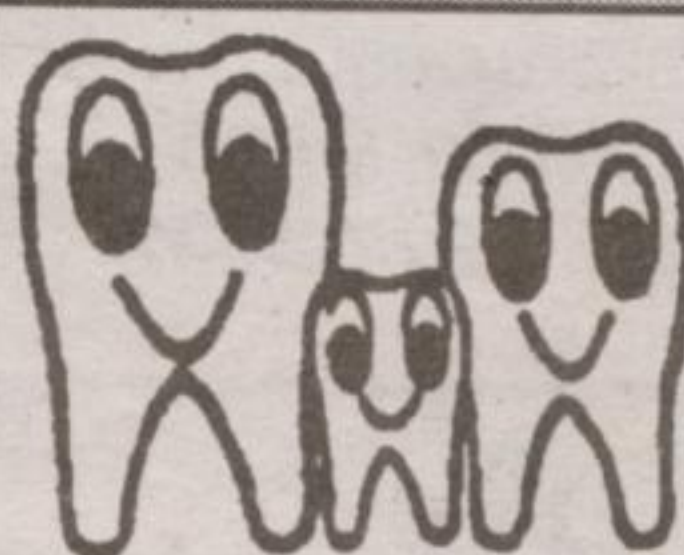


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