

# Health Care

## Give your health a shot in the arm

### Halton Region Health Department sets up free flu shot clinics

Every resident can get a free flu shot this fall to ward off influenza which can strike even an healthy person.

Halton Region chairman Joyce Savoline who received a flu shot earlier this month, said, "The flu shot is a precautionary measure I take every year as my best defence against getting sick. Flu shots have always worked for me."

"Influenza is the most common infectious disease causing death in Ontario, and is associated with as many as 30,000 hospitalizations a year," according to Dr. Allison McGeer of Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto. "Getting vaccinated is the most

important means to stop its transmission and to protect the health of all Ontarians."

In Halton, where the Health Department held free flu shot clinics, the combined efforts of staff, volunteers, family members and visitors to get flu shots managed to keep the virus out of regional hospitals, long-term care facilities and rest and retirement homes.

The Health Department is holding free flu shot clinics again this fall. (See sidebar for times and locations in north Halton.)

"Because the flu virus changes from year to year, last year's immunity won't help you against the virus that will cause problems this year. Therefore, it is important to get a flu shot every year," said Dr. Colin D' Cunha, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health.

Disease control experts have identified the Moscow, New Caledonia, and Sichuan as among the most serious strains of the virus in 2001-2002.

Being vaccinated cannot give people the flu. The vaccine contains no live virus to cause infection. However, once injected, it does take 10 to 14 days to begin to protect a person from the flu virus—making it possible to still get the flu during this time period. The vaccine has been proven to be 70 to 90 per cent effective against the flu in most persons, and those

who do get it, find their symptoms are much milder.

The Health Department recommends flu shots for children. It is children who are usually afflicted first with the flu and are harbingers of what's to come for the rest of the community. Up to 40 per cent of children may become infected. They unwittingly share the infection with families and friends.

Children as young as six months old can be safely immunized. For the best protection, children eight years old and younger require two doses of the vaccine at least one month apart the first year they receive the vaccine. Two doses are required because children may have little previous experience with influenza and therefore need the "booster" dose.

For more information about this year's influenza immunization program call the Halton Region Health Department's Flu Info Line, 1-866-4-HALTON (1-866-442-5866). TTY 827-9833 or visit the Web site at [www.region.halton.on.ca/health](http://www.region.halton.on.ca/health).



#### Who shouldn't get a shot?

- children under age six months
- anyone allergic to eggs or to any components of the vaccine
- anyone who has had severe reaction to a previous dose
- anyone having an acute illness should wait until they've recovered
- anyone with a history of Guillain-Barré Syndrome should consult with their doctor first
- anyone who developed Oculo Respiratory Syndrome after getting the flu shot last year (red eyes, cough, sore throat, breathing difficulties, wheezing and chest tightness), should consult with their doctor first.

#### Free flu shot clinics in north Halton

The Halton Region Health Department is offering free flu shots to all residents of Halton over six months of age at the following times and locations:


Tuesday, October 23	4-8 p.m.	Georgetown High School cafeteria 70 Guelph Street, Georgetown
Tuesday, October 30	3-8 p.m.	St. Brigid's Catholic School gym 73 Miller Drive, Georgetown
Thursday, November 1	3-8 p.m.	Acton Seniors Centre 415 Queen Street E., Acton
Tuesday, November 13	3-8 p.m.	Milton High School cafeteria 369 Williams Ave, Milton
Wednesday, November 21	3-8 p.m.	Bishop Reding High School gym C 1600 Main Street, Milton

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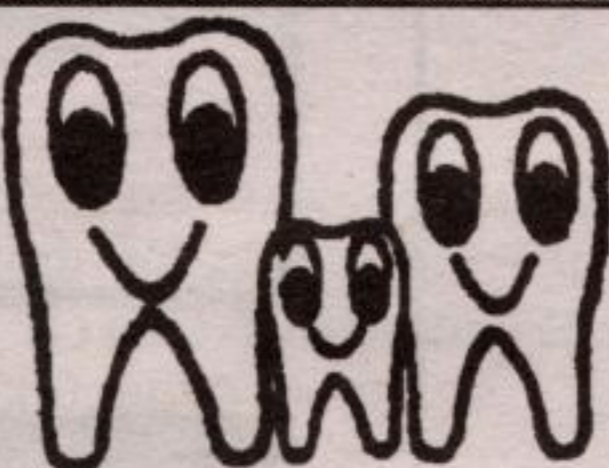
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