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Flu shots are useful for all, medical officer insists

BY LISA QUEEN
 Staff Writer

Mention outbreaks of West Nile virus, E. coli or meningitis and the public reacts with alarm.

On the other hand, influenza, or the flu as it is commonly called, barely warrants a passing thought by most adults.

However, while York Region associate medical officer of health Dr. Hanif Kassam can't compare one disease to another, he warns the flu is a more prevalent illness and can be a bigger killer than other health scares.

At particular risk are the elderly and people suffering from respiratory, kidney and cardiac diseases and diabetes.

"If you compare the flu to something like E. coli, the numbers who die (from influenza) are significantly higher," Dr. Kassam said.

He is hoping to convince the 60 per cent of adults who aren't taking advantage of free annual flu shots to get immunized as a way of stopping the spread of the highly contagious viral infection.

Beginning today and running until Nov. 9, public health nurses will be holding clinics where residents can receive free flu shots.

A flyer outlining the schedule of clinics can be found inserted in today's *Economist & Sun/Tribune*.

"There is a benefit to all of society in receiving the flu shot. The single most effective method to prevent the flu is

being immunized," said Dr. Kassam, who received his shot Tuesday afternoon.

"In the last years, there have been random trials that have shown the benefits of the vaccine.

"There are benefits in the workplace for employers and employees in reducing absenteeism. I would generally recommend (the flu shot) to all people."

According to Bill Mindell, York Region's director of infectious diseases control, there were 29 reported cases of E. coli O157:H7 in the region in 2000, 23 cases in 2001 and 25 this year to date.

Meanwhile, there were nine reported cases of meningococcal meningitis in York in 2000, three cases in 2001 and two so far this year.

By comparison, during the 1998/99 flu season, York had 76 reported cases of influenza and seven flu outbreaks in long-term care facilities. There were 101 reported flu cases and 14 outbreaks in the 1999/00 season.

During the 2000/01 season — the first time the province provided universal free flu shots to all Ontarians — flu cases in York dropped to 38 while there was only one outbreak.

Mr. Mindell pointed out virtually all cases of E. coli and meningitis are reported to public health.

However, many cases of the flu aren't reported, meaning there are dozens of cases of influenza that aren't included in the statistics.

"Many people have influenza but we only track the presence of it on a surveillance basis," Mr. Mindell said.

The flu is transmitted by droplets expelled by coughing and sneezing. The "most effective" transmitters of influenza are children, according to Dr. Kassam.

After an incubation period of one to four days, victims will exhibit symptoms that include headache, fever, loss of appetite, weakness, malaise, aches and pains and severe muscle pain.

With bed rest of aspirin, most patients will recover in about a week.

However, some patients will develop pneumonia, which can result in death from hemorrhaging in the lungs.

There are two main strains of the flu, a more prevalent Type A and Type B, which is more severe.

Dr. Kassam speculated many people don't understand how serious influenza is because general aches and pains or gastrointestinal bugs are often wrongly called "the flu."

That makes it easy to perceive the flu as a mild illness rather than a serious and contagious infection.

Dr. Kassam disputed claims flu shots can make recipients suffer from flu-like symptoms.

He stressed symptoms of the flu shot are minimal and are generally contained to a little pain in the area around where the needle was administered.

Arts, Crafts & Bake Sale

Eastern Gate Village

Where: **Stouffville Pentecostal Church**
 6853 Main St., Stouffville
 When: **October 19, 2002**
 Time: **9am - 2pm**

Water Colour Painting
Stoneware Pottery
Woodworking
Folk Art
Handcrafts
Worldwide Used Postage
Stamps
Lots of home baked goods
Lunch Table
... and much, much more!

Free Admission

Draw Prizes

Schizophrenia is a medical illness.

The primary response must be medical treatment.

Schizophrenia Society of Ontario
 1-800-449-6367 - www.web.net/~sso

This message brought to you as a community service of The Economist & Sun

Stouffville Area Churches Welcome You

COMMUNITY MENNONITE CHURCH

Parkview Village Auditorium
 12184 Ninth Line, Stouffville
 (905) 640-9730 ComMenChurch@aol.com
11:00 am Thanksgiving Service

"What does it mean to be thankful when we have so much and others have so little"



Wideman Mennonite Church

9:45 am - Sunday School for all ages
10:55 am - Worship Service
Speaker: Pastor Ken Wellington

Church Office: 640-6219 For a ride call: 640-4185

STOUFFVILLE'S LIGHTHOUSE BAPTIST CHURCH

6273 Main Street
 The MIRACLE on MAIN STREET
 Continues October 13th, 2002
 Meet our new Pastor -
 Rev. Robert Lindsay Gatto
 Sunday school for everyone - 10:00 am
 Worship Service 11:00 am
 Bible Study & Prayer Meeting
 Thursday 7:00 pm
 Exciting services with practical and helpful bible teaching
 "The difference makes it worth the distance"
 For information call
 905-640-2911 or 416 267-3802
 All Welcome - God Bless - We Care



THE ANGLICAN PARISH of CHRIST CHURCH
 254 Sunset Blvd., Stouffville
The Rev. Robert A. Shields
 (905) 640-1461

Sunday October 13th, 2002
 21st Sunday after Pentecost
 Harvest Thanksgiving
 8:00 am Holy Communion
 10:00 am Choral Eucharist

Church School and Nursery provided
Everyone Welcome

e-mail: christchurch.stouffville@sympatico.ca
 web site: www3.sympatico.ca/christchurch.stouffville

To advertise in this section please call Gail Reeves 905-640-2612

ST. JAMES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Welcome to...
Sunday, October 13th, 2002
 Worship & Church School
 10:30 am
 Nursery Provided
 Thank God for your blessings!
 Autumn Bazaar & Tea Room
 Saturday, October 19
 9:30 a.m. - Noon
 6432 Main St. Stouffville 640-3151
www3.sympatico.ca/st_james.stouffville

Sharing God's Love!
Everyone always welcome.

BLOOMINGTON GOSPEL CHURCH

13660 Ninth Line
 (905) 642-4414
 Dr. John B. Howarth Pastor - Teacher
Sunday, October 13th, 2002
 Sunday School 9:30 am
 Thanksgiving & World Relief Sunday
 Summer Missions Reports
 "Thanking God for his gift" 2 Corinthians 9:6-15
 No Evening Service
Everyone Welcome

Springvale Baptist Church

Stouffville Rd. at Kennedy Rd.
 905-887-5651
 Senior Pastor: Bob Flemming
 Associate Pastor: Bill Thornton
 Associate Pastor Student Ministries: Jay Sandiford
 Worship & Music Co-ordinator Heather Thornton
 Children's Ministries Co-ordinator Sharon Russell
Sunday October 13th, 2002
 9:45 a.m.:
 Pastor Bill Thornton
 Message Series:
 "The New Community"
 11:00 am:
 Sunday School for all ages
Wednesday Oct. 16th, 2002
 7:00 pm: Kids Clubs grades jk-6,
 Choir & Small Groups
 Nursery Provided



Parkview Village

12184 Ninth Line South, Stouffville
Sunday
October 13th, 2002
Rev. Graham & Bev Butcher
7:00 pm
Village Auditorium

STOUFFVILLE PENTECOSTAL CHURCH

6853 Main St., Stouffville (905) 640-5696
 Sunday Oct. 13th, 2002
 Thanksgiving Sunday
 10:00 am Morning Worship
 Adventure Bay for kids ages 5 to Grade 5
 on Wednesday
 Call Church 905-640-5696 for information

VIVIAN BAPTIST CHURCH

473-3543
 Pastor: Robert Okum
 On Hwy. 48 at Vivian Rd.
 Holding forth the doctrines of grace
 9:45 a.m. - Sunday School
 11:00 a.m. - Morning Worship
 7:00 p.m. - Evening Worship
 Everyone is Welcome

STOUFFVILLE UNITED CHURCH

34 Church St. N. 905-640-1163
 Worship Minister: Rev. Robert Nightingale
Sunday Oct. 13th, 2002
 10:30 am Worship Service for Thanksgiving,
 Baby Fold, Children's Worship
 & Youth Pac
Everyone Welcome