

## Wellness Articles

Attached are weekly health and wellness articles provided by Alberta Health Services. As a way to help all Albertans live a healthy life, we welcome and encourage weekly newspapers, community newsletters and other publications to reproduce this information free of charge. Credit to Alberta Health Services or the identified content provider would be appreciated.

An archive of past wellness articles is available at <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/9966.asp>

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### Influenza Season

It happens every fall: influenza arrives in Alberta, and takes a serious toll on our communities.

Influenza is a real threat. It's also preventable.

Influenza immunization will be made available, starting October 23, free of charge, to all Albertans six months of age and older.

It's the single most effective means of reducing your risk of influenza, particularly when you receive it as early in the season as possible. By getting immunized early, you will give your body the opportunity to respond to immunization, and produce antibodies that will arm you against the influenza viruses you'll be exposed to again throughout the season.

Each year, influenza vaccine is developed to protect us against the strains of virus likely to circulate in our community. Though vaccine effectiveness may vary, know this: last season, influenza vaccine cut Albertan's risk of influenza by about 40%. Without immunization, Albertans were completely at risk.

And we do mean all Albertans.

Although some individuals (pregnant women, seniors, children, and individuals with underlying health conditions or compromised immune systems) are at greater risk for severe complications, without immunization, even healthy Albertans are at risk of severe illness and even death.

64 Albertans died with influenza last season, and more than 1,600 Albertans were hospitalized.

Let's do better this year.

Prevention is your protection. Get immunized this season.

For more information on the influenza program, including local clinic locations and schedules, visit [ahs.ca/influenza](http://ahs.ca/influenza) or call Health Link at 811.