

Stafford Pharmacy and Home Healthcare

NOVEMBER NEWS

Seasonal Influenza (Flu) Vaccine

What is influenza or the flu?

It is an infection of the nose, throat and lungs caused by the influenza virus. Most cases occur in the winter months from November to March.

How is the virus spread?

It is spread through the air when someone talks, coughs or sneezes. When other's breathe in the virus they can become sick. It can also be spread by handling objects that have been coughed or sneezed on.

How can influenza be prevented?

- **Get the seasonal flu vaccine!**
- Wash your hands often, or use an alcohol based hand sanitizer
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing
- Stay home and rest when you are sick!

What are the symptoms of the flu?

- Fever of 38°C (100.4°F) or higher
- Cough
- Fatigue
- Headache and muscle aches
- Loss of appetite

Most people feel better within a week. However, some may develop more serious complications such as pneumonia which re-

quires hospitalization. Persons with chronic illnesses, children under the age of 2, pregnant women and adults over 65 are more at risk of developing complications.

Who should get the vaccine?

All Albertans aged six months and older should receive the flu vaccine each year!

The vaccine is especially important for those people who are at higher risk of developing complications if they get sick with the flu.

Is the vaccine safe?

Yes. In Canada vaccines undergo rigorous testing and must pass a licensing procedure before they can be used.

Who should not have the vaccine?

- Those with serious allergies to eggs or chicken
- Those who have had a serious reaction to the flu vaccine in the past
- Children younger than 6 months

What are the common side effects to the vaccine?

- Mild pain/redness around where the needle was given
- Tiredness/Irritability
- Mild fever, muscle aches and pains.

These side effects are typically mild and usually disappear within 24-48 hours of receiving the vaccine.

Do you need 2 vaccines again this year?

No. The seasonal flu vaccination protects against H1N1 as well as two other influenza strains.

Where can I get my Flu Vaccine?

Haven't received your flu vaccine yet? Don't fret!

The pharmacists at Stafford Pharmacy are administering flu vaccines for the month of November.

The vaccine is FREE for all Alberta residents.

We are accepting appointments on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 3:00 PM and 5:00 PM. **Call 403-320-6500 Ext 1 to book your appointment today!**

(Children under the age of 10 and pregnant women must have their vaccine administered at their physicians office or at a drop in clinic)



Rx Center— How long is my prescription good for?

When my doctor writes me a prescription how long is it good for?

The paper prescription that your doctor gives you is valid for **1 year** from the date it is written. That being said, the pharmacist can use his/her professional judgment to determine whether or not the prescription should still be used.

For example, if the doctor writes you a prescription for an anti-biotic for an ear infection and you bring it to the pharmacist 6 months later, the pharmacist may refuse to fill the prescription. This is because the anti-biotic may not be appropriate for the infection you currently have. Your new

condition requires the attention of a physician.

Once you bring your prescription to the pharmacy, how long do you have to fill it?

The majority of prescriptions can be refilled for up to 18 months after it is dropped off at the pharmacy (as long as there are refills). Medications in the controlled and targeted substances group can only be refilled for 1 year after the prescription is dropped off at the pharmacy.

This means that **your doctor cannot give you an unlimited amount of refills.** If the doctor

writes you a prescription for 3 years, or puts 10 refills on the prescription, you will only be able to refill the prescription for up to **18 months (or 1 year)** from the day it was brought to the pharmacy.

Why can't prescriptions be refilled for longer than 18 months?

The laws on how long prescriptions can be filled for are for your protection. It is important to see the doctor for re-assessment to ensure the medication prescribed is still appropriate for you!



Vitamin Spotlight— Vitamin C

What is Vitamin C?

Vitamin C, or ascorbic acid, is a water-soluble vitamin essential for the normal functioning of the body. Humans cannot make their own vitamin C and therefore we must obtain it through our diet.

What does Vitamin C do?

Vitamin C is required to make collagen, an important component of blood vessels, tendons, ligaments and bone. Vitamin C may also be used to help shorten the duration of the common cold by helping to boost your immune system.

What are symptoms of Vitamin C deficiency?

Symptoms include bleeding gums,

bruising easily, hair and tooth loss, and joint pain and swelling.

What causes deficiency?

A number of medications are known to decrease vitamin C. This includes estrogen containing oral contraceptives and even the regular use of regular strength aspirin.

How common is Vitamin C deficiency?

Severe vitamin C deficiency, also known as scurvy, is rare in developed countries. Eating a balanced diet is the best way to ensure you have adequate levels of vitamin C.

What foods is Vitamin C found in?

All fruits and vegetables contain some vitamin C namely: Red Peppers, Strawberries, citrus fruits, broccoli, potatoes and tomatoes.

Who should consider supplementing with Vitamin C?

Individuals who do not consume a diet with 3-5 servings of vegetables a day.

Also, if you are fighting a cold, high doses of Vitamin C for a short period of time may help to shorten the duration of your cold!

Pharmacist's Recommendations

SISU Vitamin C

SISU Ester-C

Looking for the Products Recommended by the pharmacists at Stafford Pharmacy & Home Healthcare? Look for this symbol by products discussed in this newsletter!!! If you have any questions ask to speak with Jaclyn or Igor at the pharmacy counter today!



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