



With fall comes the annual availability of the influenza vaccination at the Okotoks Health and Wellness Centre and the Black Diamond Health Unit at Oilfields General Hospital. Influenza is a very serious respiratory illness that can be life-threatening for people at high risk and can cause severe illness for the rest of the population. Influenza vaccine is important for everyone and particularly essential for health care workers, seniors, infants / children between six months and fifty nine months and individuals with chronic medical conditions. It is also important for the household members of high risk groups to get vaccinated to protect themselves and their loved ones.

Consistent with the Sheep River Health Trust's goal of advocating for clients to take responsibility for their own health, members of the community are encouraged to speak to their health professionals about immunization. The childhood vaccination schedule includes vaccinations for meningitis, measles, mumps , rubella, diphtheria, tetanus, polio, whooping cough and chicken pox.

The relatively new vaccine being offered to young women is the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination. This vaccine helps protect against four types of HPV including two types that cause 70% of cervical cancer cases. After extensive medical testing, it has been supported by the Canadian Pediatric Society, the Society of Obstetricians & Gynecologists of Canada and the National Advisory Committee on Immunization.

We are pleased to report that vaccination rates in the Sheep River Health Trust area have improved in the last several years - thus, providing improved health protection for all members of the community.