

# Protect Yourself and Your Family

It's that time of year again and staff at Carleton Place & District Memorial Hospital, Almonte General Hospital, Fairview Manor and Lanark County Paramedic Services are doing their part to help fight the flu.

“As organizations committed to safe, high quality care, protecting our patients and residents from the flu is vitally important. And we also want to protect each other, our families and our friends,” notes Aileen Puckett, Infection Prevention & Control Officer for both CPDMH and AGH. “Getting the flu can be very serious.”

Aileen notes that there are a lot of misconceptions about the flu shot and it can be confusing. She stresses that you can't get the flu from the flu shot. While some people may get a slight temperature or a sore arm, the vaccine does not contain a live virus. Experiencing the mild side effects of the flu shot is nothing compared to getting the actual flu.

Aileen says one of the most important messages regarding the flu shot centres around what is called ‘herd immunity’.

“The more people who get the shot, the more we can protect those in our community that cannot get vaccinated,” she says. “Spreading the flu to people with compromised immune systems, the frail elderly or very young children could lead to severe illness and complications, even resulting in death.” People that can't get the flu shot include those with severe allergies to the vaccine components and babies under 6 months. Anyone with a fever should wait until you are better.

Visit your family doctor or local pharmacy to get your flu shot. Don't forget your health card.

Aileen offers one other flu reminder: “If you are sick, please do not visit a loved one in the hospital or Fairview Manor until you are better - especially if you have a fever or cough. Thank you for helping us keep our patients and residents safe.”



## FLU PREVENTION CHECKLIST

- ✓ Get your flu shot from your family doctor or local pharmacy
- ✓ Wash your hands often
- ✓ Keep your hands away from your face
- ✓ Cough and sneeze into your arm, not your hand
- ✓ Keep common surface areas clean and disinfected
- ✓ If you get sick, stay home