

For Immediate Release
September 3, 2015

Back-to-School Immunization Information

Pharmacists Help with Proper Protection and Prevention for Grade School Through Post Secondary

Richmond, BC, September 3, 2015 – [The Canadian Medical Association](#) (CMA) recently expressed concern about declining immunization rates in Canada and would like to see more efforts to educate parents who hesitate to pursue vaccination for their children. The physicians also voted to ask that governments across the country authorize schools to require a mandatory declaration of immunization status for all students.

CMA issued a press release that states, “If results indicate that a student has not been immunized, there would then be a conversation between public health officials and parents.”

[London Drugs](#) pharmacists are joining the CMA to help educate parents on immunization options as back to school nears. Getting ready for back to school or dorm isn’t limited to making sure you have the right school supplies and latest tech gear. It also means making sure grade school children and adults have the proper and up-to-date vaccinations to prevent potentially serious health issues from coming in contact with a variety of communicable diseases.

IMMUNIZATION OVERVIEW

Immunization	Recommended for Grade School	Recommended for Adults	Available at London Drugs*
Pre-school immunizations (diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella)	YES	If not received during preschool, grade school (grades 1 or 5 or 9)	London Drugs recommends checking with your public health agency first for pre-school vaccination options.
Herpes zoster (shingles)		YES 50+ years	YES
Human papillomavirus (HPV)	YES (ages 9-18)	YES (ages 18-26)	YES
Influenza (flu)	YES (ages 5 -18)	YES 18+	YES
Meningococcal diseases		YES Up to and including 24 years	YES
Pneumococcal disease		YES 65+ years	YES
Pertussis (whooping cough)		YES 18+ years	YES
Polio	YES	YES (if not taken as child)	YES
Travellers' vaccinations (hepatitis A and B, yellow fever, cholera, and typhoid fever)		YES	YES

* Subject to vaccine availability by location and differing provincial immunization regulation. Immunization fees may apply.

GRADE SCHOOL IMMUNIZATION

Public health agencies across Western Canada will often provide the recommended vaccinations for grade school children. Most parents will find their schools will offer these programs in affiliation with their provincial public health agency.

[The Public Health Agency of Canada's recommended immunization schedule](#) provides a detailed breakdown of what vaccinations are recommended and at what age they should be administered.

Helping children get ready for their immunizations is important, as many children often become worried about getting needles.

"It's important to communicate to the child what is about to happen, and tell them when they will be getting their needle," says **Anil Goorachurn, Pharmacy Manager, London Drugs**. "When we administer a vaccine, we will often try and take their mind off of the needle by thinking of a favourite memory or asking about a friend. Helping them to stay calm and focus on something happy is a great way for parents to help their child be prepared."

Children in school are at higher risk for sharing the flu virus, so being proactive and prepared for the upcoming flu season is also strongly recommended by London Drugs' pharmacists.

"By getting the influenza vaccination early in the season, as well as taking some simple and healthy preventative actions, you not only protect yourself, but you protect others because you are less likely to spread the flu," says Goorachurn. "This is especially important in grade school where children tend to share things like clothing, beverages and snacks."

London Drugs encourages parents to ask if they, or their children, qualify for a publicly funded flu shot.

The flu shot will be available at all London Drugs locations in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba in late October and availability ranges by province. Immunization age allowance also varies based on provincial regulation. Please check with your pharmacist regarding availability and options.

[Learn more about influenza vaccination through London Drugs.](#)

ADULT IMMUNIZATION

In recent years, new vaccines have become available for adults. These include vaccines for herpes zoster (shingles) and human papillomavirus (a sexually transmitted virus that causes genital warts and certain cancers). However, the number of Canadians who avail themselves of these vaccines remains low. This means that many adults remain unnecessarily vulnerable to vaccine-preventable diseases.

There are many reasons why adults fail to get the vaccinations that they need. These include not liking injections, assuming injections are just for children, lack of awareness that certain diseases can be vaccinated against, and simply forgetting follow-ups such as those required for hepatitis prevention.

[Learn more about adult immunization.](#)

STUDENTS STUDYING ABROAD

Pharmacists recommend post-secondary students who may not have had certain immunizations during their grade school years, ask about their options – especially those who are travelling abroad for their schooling.

[London Drugs travel immunization](#) options will provide the vaccinations an adult student will require to keep them properly protected outside of Canada.

"If you are travelling outside of the country to study, you may require vaccines to prevent diseases prevalent in the countries where you travel," says Goorachurn. "These include, but are not limited to, hepatitis A and B, yellow fever, cholera, and typhoid fever."

Hepatitis A and B are easy to contract in many parts of the world. Hepatitis A—a serious liver disease that is

usually contracted by ingesting food or drinks that have been contaminated with human waste—is the most common vaccine-preventable disease in travellers.

Those travelling to Mexico, South or Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, South East Asia, China and the Middle East are at greatest risk for contracting hepatitis A. Hepatitis B is a type of hepatitis commonly contracted through exposure to the body fluids of an infected person, and is less common.

Vaccines against hepatitis A and B are usually given together in a vaccine product called Twinrix®, available from the London Drugs pharmacy.

This vaccine can be injected by your doctor (or other primary health professional) or by a London Drugs Travel Medicine Pharmacists or other certified injection pharmacist.

For more information on adult vaccination recommendations, please visit Health Canada's Canadian Immunization Guide at: www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/cig-gci/p03-02-eng.php#table-1.

ABOUT LONDON DRUGS

Founded in 1945, B.C.-based London Drugs has 79 stores in more than 35 major markets throughout British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba including its online store www.londondrugs.com London Drugs offers consumers a range of products from digital cameras and cosmetics to computers and televisions. Renowned for its creative approach to retailing, the company employs more than 7,500 people with pharmacy and health care services being the heart of its business. Committed to innovation and superior customer service, London Drugs has established itself as a reputable and caring company and continues to position itself for future growth and development. For more information, visit www.LondonDrugs.com.

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Local London Drugs Pharmacists are available to provide health advice for back to school.

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