

## Flu cases expected to escalate across Western Canada during the holidays

### *Pharmacists remind families to take preventative measures to avoid getting sick and help protect elderly family members*

**December 21, 2016, RICHMOND, B.C.** – Pharmacists expect flu cases to escalate in the coming week and ramp up into the start of new year as more people gather together to socialize over the holidays.

“There are far more opportunities for the virus to spread during the holidays since people are more social and often travel. Influenza is a highly contagious viral infection that spreads easily from one person to another through coughing, sneezing or by touching objects contaminated with the flu virus and then touching the mouth, eyes or nose,” says Gianni Del Negro, London Drugs pharmacy manager.

Symptoms of influenza typically include the sudden onset of high fever, chills, sore throat, cough and myalgia. Those experiencing these symptoms should take precautions like frequent hand washing, sneezing or coughing into the elbow, and keeping one’s distance from other people.

“By taking simple and healthy preventative actions and by getting your flu shot, you not only protect yourself, but you protect others. It’s really important that all family members do their part to help prevent the spread of illness – especially to elderly family members who are particularly vulnerable,” Del Negro says.

Preventing the spread of flu from family member to family member over the holidays

#### **1) Replace hand towels / use paper towel**

Viruses can remain alive for several hours on fabric so when someone in your home is sick, replace hand towels with disposable paper towel. If you don’t like the idea of paper towels, make sure everyone has, and uses, their own cloth towel.

#### **2) Sanitize commonly used surfaces**

Refrigerator handles, doorknobs, faucets, TV remotes, phones and keyboards are just a few of the areas around the home where germs can live up to 24 hours from the time of transfer. Clean them frequently with a disinfectant or disinfecting wipes.

#### **3) Keep your distance if you can**

It can be especially tough over the holidays, but sometimes the best thing you can do to stay well is to keep your distance. If you can, give the sick family member their own area with all the things they need like tissues, medication, zinc lozenges and vitamin C tablets.

Other the holidays, many local primary-care offices and family clinics have reduced hours so emergency rooms often see longer wait times. Pharmacists are available to offer advice to about over-the-counter medications to manage symptoms and can recommend the best medications for each person in the family to suite their individual needs. They can also vaccinate adults and children aged 5 years and up in BC, 9 years and up in Alberta and Saskatchewan and 7 years and up in Manitoba.

### **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 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 7,000 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.

London Drugs pharmacists are available to speak to the media about cold and flu season, flu vaccinations, treatment and prevention. For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact:

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