

FOR RELEASE
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Another early start to flu season

WHITEHORSE—Two dozen cases of influenza have been officially confirmed throughout Yukon according to Chief Medical Officer of Health Dr. Brendan Hanley.

"Of the ones that have been subtyped, all are coming back as H3, indicating probable H3N2 influenza, which is one of the standard strains covered in this year's vaccine. While sufferers range from 10-month-old to 85-years-old, there have been no hospitalizations due to influenza so far.

"We know that this is just the tip of the iceberg," Hanley said. "For every lab-confirmed case, there are many more that go undiagnosed officially."

While residents of continuing care facilities received their immunizations earlier, Yukon's public flu immunization clinics begin on Monday, November 7. The vaccine is free and available to everyone over the age of six months through local health centres in the communities. The Whitehorse Health Centre and the Kwanlin Dün Health Centre offer regular immunization clinics. Special immunization clinics are being held throughout Whitehorse and the communities.

Hanley urges everyone to obtain their immunization against this year's flu strains, especially people under the age of five years or over 65, as well as people who have chronic conditions.

In healthy individuals, influenza symptoms are generally mild to moderate. In more serious cases, symptoms can include a rapid onset of high fever, cough, sore throat, aches, pains and chills. Rest and treatment of symptoms are usually all that is needed. People who suspect they have the flu should avoid spreading it by staying home until they feel better.

Severe illness, complications and worsening of other health conditions can occur as a result of influenza especially for those at the extremes of age and those with chronic medical conditions. People with severe symptoms, or who get the flu on top of underlying medical conditions, should get medical advice by either calling the Yukon HealthLine at 811 or consulting with their community nurse, family doctor or an emergency physician.

To find out when Whitehorse flu clinics are open, check the schedule or visit yukonimmunization.ca. In the communities, contact your local health centre.

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