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2008 FLU CLINICS ANNOUNCED

WHITEHORSE – Dr. Brendan Hanley, Yukon Medical Officer of Health, is encouraging Yukoners to get their free flu shot to reduce the chances of getting sick this year. Flu clinics will be open to the public on Monday, October 27 in Whitehorse and most communities.

“Getting vaccinated against the influenza bug is the single best way of protecting yourself – and those around you – from getting the flu,” Hanley said. “I especially encourage people with chronic conditions, such as asthma, to protect themselves.”

Hanley added that children six months to 23 months old should also be vaccinated. “I know it’s hard to see your baby get yet another shot but young children have an underdeveloped immune system and are especially vulnerable if they get sick with influenza.”

The risk of spreading the flu to other children and caregivers is high when children are in daycare or day home situations. For that reason, daycare and day home operators and their employees are also encouraged to get immunized.

Influenza, also known as the flu, is a contagious virus that affects the respiratory system. Symptoms include the sudden onset of high fever, chills, headaches, muscle aches and pains, chest discomfort and a heavy cough.

Last year, 6,843 doses of vaccine were administered, down from the 7,169 doses administered the previous year.

“We’ve been lucky in the past few years that there hasn’t been a major outbreak in Yukon,” Hanley said. “But we won’t always be as lucky.”

The 2008 flu campaign coincides with the launch of the “Critters” campaign, which encourages four to ten-year-olds to practice proper respiratory etiquette and wash, wash, wash their hands.

A list of dates, times and locations can be found on the Health and Social Services' website at www.hss.gov.yk.ca/programs/health/ycdc/flu_vaccination_clinics/.

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