**[Update](%22%20%5Cl%20%22English) from Minister Schulte**

Good day,

Fall is upon us, and with it comes cooler temperatures and the start of the annual flu season. This year, more than ever, it is important to get your flu shot.

In Canada, the flu is among the top 10 leading causes of death. Seniors and those who live in nursing homes or other long-term care facilities are at greater risk of getting flu-related complications such as pneumonia, worsening of chronic health conditions, hospitalization or even death.

**Getting the flu shot**

The flu shot is the best way to prevent the flu, and it can also reduce the severity of flu-related complications. While the flu shot will not protect you against COVID-19, it will help reduce your chances of being infected with COVID-19 and the flu at the same time, which could lead to more serious complications.

It is best to get the flu shot between October and December, so that you are protected during the height of the flu season. It can take up to two weeks for your body to build protection against the flu once you are vaccinated. So get the flu shot early to protect yourself, your family and your community!

To learn more and to find out where to get your flu shot, talk to a health care professional or visit [Canada.ca/Flu](http://www.canada.ca/flu).

**Preventing the flu**

In addition to getting the flu shot, you can help prevent the spread of the flu and other respiratory viruses by practicing the following healthy habits:

* Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
* Cough and sneeze into a tissue or the bend of your arm.
* Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
* Dispose of used tissues in a lined waste container and then wash your hands.
* Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects, such as toilets, phones and door handles.
* Stay away from others if you feel sick.
* If you have  symptoms, [isolate yourself from others](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/covid-19-how-to-isolate-at-home.html) and contact your health care provider or [local public health authority](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/symptoms/provincial-territorial-resources-covid-19.html) for guidance. You may need to be tested for [COVID-19](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/symptoms.html#:~:text=gastrointestinal%20symptoms%20%28abdominal%20pain%2C%20diarrhea%2C%20vomiting%29%20feeling%20very,14%20days%20to%20appear%20after%20exposure%20to%20COVID-19).

**Avoiding interruptions in Guaranteed Income Supplement benefits**

To avoid any interruptions in benefits in January 2021, Guaranteed Income Supplement recipients who have not already filed their 2019 income tax should contact Service Canada by calling 1-800-277-9914 (English) or 1-800-277-9915 (French) or should file their taxes electronically with the Canada Revenue Agency. That way, we can ensure that you continue to receive your benefits when you need them the most.

**Reminder: New Horizons for Seniors Program**

The annual New Horizons for Seniors Program [Call for Proposals](https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/news/2020/09/government-of-canada-launches-call-for-proposals-for-community-based-projects-that-support-seniors.html) closes on **October 20, 2020**. This program funds community-based projects that make a difference in the lives of seniors. For details, visit <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/new-horizons-seniors.html>.

The fight against COVID-19 is ongoing, so let us continue to follow public health guidance and keep our communities strong and healthy. Thank you for taking action this flu season!

Minister Deb Schulte

**Spread the word:**

I hope you will take a minute to ensure that this message reaches as many seniors (and the people who support them) as possible. Please share it with your networks through social media, email or your newsletter.

If you would no longer like to receive updates from the Minister or if you would like to add another email address to this distribution list, please reply to

nc-stakeholder\_relations\_intervenants-gd@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca