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## FACTSHEET

May 14, 2009

Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport  
Ministry of Health Services

### **SOME FACTS ABOUT SEASONAL INFLUENZA**

- Seasonal influenza outbreaks happen every year in British Columbia and Canada, with the severity of the illness and the number of people who catch it varying from year to year.
- Several strains of influenza circulate during flu season, which runs from late fall to spring every year. These seasonal strains are previously seen flu viruses or mutations of previously seen viruses.
- Each year, scientists assess which viruses are likely to circulate widely during the upcoming flu season, and create a vaccine to combat those strains.
- In an average flu season, approximately 10 to 25 per cent of the population will be infected. Some will have no symptoms at all, while most people suffer from mild illness, and therefore do not see their doctors and do not report the illness. Some have moderate to severe illness. Seniors, small children and people with immune deficiencies or chronic diseases are most at risk of serious illness from seasonal flu.
- From August 2007 to August 2008, 3,800 flu tests were performed in B.C., but only 1,066 of them came back positive for either influenza type A or B.
- In British Columbia, there are an estimated 400 to 800 deaths each year from flu and/or pneumonia.
- In Canada, there are 4,000 to 8,000 deaths per year from flu and pneumonia.
- Globally, it is estimated there are hundreds of thousands of deaths each year from flu and its complications.
- For more information on how to protect yourself and your family from flu, visit [www.healthlinkbc.ca](http://www.healthlinkbc.ca) or call 8-1-1, day or night. Further information is also available at <http://fightflu.ca/index-eng.html>.