

It's Flu Season – Protect Yourself At Northern Shores Pharmacy!

Anyone can catch the flu. Protect yourself – and others – by learning about the virus and recognizing the symptoms. The Flu causes about 12,200 hospitalizations and 3,600 deaths in Canada per year. Complications from the flu can also include pneumonia which can be deadly.

Symptoms can include:

- fever
- chills
- cough
- runny eyes
- stuffy nose
- headache
- muscle aches
- weakness and tiredness

Symptoms appear ~1-4 days after you've been exposed.

However, it's contagious right away – you can still catch it from someone with no symptoms. Most healthy people do recover in 7-10 days.

Who is most at risk?

Babies, Children under 5 years old, people over 65, pregnant people and people with underlying health conditions (like asthma, heart disease or diabetes).

How do I protect myself?

- Get the flu shot! No appointment necessary at Northern Shores Pharmacy :)
- Wash your hands (the virus can live on your hands for up to 3 hours)
- Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze
- Avoid touching your face – droplets of virus enter
- Stay at home when you're sick – the virus spreads more easily in groups

- Clean and disinfect hard surfaces (door handles, keyboards, phones) – the virus can live up to 8 hours on these surfaces



What about high dose flu shots (Fluzone High Dose) that are being marketed?

Fluzone High-Dose among persons aged 65 years older indicate that a stronger immune response (i.e., higher antibody levels) occurs after vaccination with Fluzone High-Dose. Whether or not the improved immune response leads to greater protection has been the topic on ongoing research.

Two studies in the New England Journal of Medicine and in the Lancet suggest that it may be so. Unfortunately, this vaccine is not covered by the Ontario government for this season. However, it is available at Northern Shores Pharmacy and some private plans do cover it. It costs about \$80 otherwise.

Bottom line please get your flu shot! You might be healthy but it may help protect those who are young, old and sick!



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Dental Disease In Pets

Dental disease is the most common ailment affecting pet dogs and cats. The recognition and treatment of dental disease is often overlooked by veterinarians and pet owners alike.

Halitosis, or bad breath, is the most common sign of oral disease and is most often caused by periodontal disease. This is an infection of the gums and potentially the supporting structures of the teeth. Plaque builds up on the tooth surface and if left in place, the plaque can mineralize to form tartar. The tartar sticks to the tooth surface and forms a scaffold for more plaque to accumulate and provides an ideal haven for destructive bacteria. With advanced dental disease, your pet's mouth can become painful. Owner may notice that their pet avoids hard food or no longer enjoys chewing on their favorite toys. Many pets with moderate to severe mouth pain will salivate excessively or rub or paw their mouth.

The most obvious clue to dental disease is the buildup of tartar on the tooth surface. The tartar and bacteria can cause inflammation of the gums (gingivitis) and recession of the gums as well. Gingivitis can be reversible once the tartar is removed but gingival recession can be permanent causing damage to the supporting structure of the tooth causing chronic pain. Sometimes the only solution to advanced dental disease such as this is extraction of the affected tooth. As you can imagine, it is often difficult to assess an animal's mouth

with them awake and a thorough oral exam often requires that the pet be anesthetized if dental disease is suspected. Once the pet is anesthetized, dental xrays can also be helpful to determine which teeth need to be extracted if the decision isn't obvious when the teeth are examined.

The time and expense for dental procedures can vary greatly. A simple dental cleaning under anesthetic can take 20-30 minutes but a severely affected mouth with dental xray, multiple extraction, dental surgery can take a number of hours to complete and this will be reflected in the cost of the procedure.

Prevention of dental disease and regular cleaning is an ideal way to avoid moderate to severe dental disease and keep the cost of care to a minimum. Although daily teeth brushing is ideal, it isn't an easy task and often not well tolerated by some pets. Fortunately, there are a good variety of diets and treats that are designed to mechanically clean teeth during normal chewing and are a simple and effective way to minimize dental disease. Your veterinary team is your best resource for determining what might be the best preventive products for your dog or cat.



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