

**For Immediate Release | April 29, 2022**

## **Interior Health recognizes National Immunization Awareness Week**

**IH Wide** – As we close out National Immunization Awareness Week (April 23 – 30), Interior Health encourages families to stay on track with their immunizations.

“Vaccines have saved more lives in Canada than any other medical intervention in the past 60 to 70 years,” said Dr. Carol Fenton, Interior Health Medical Health Officer. As one example, as late as the 1950s, the polio virus caused paralysis or death in thousands of people, most of them children. Thanks to the polio vaccines, Canada virtually eliminated polio by 1964 with the last case acquired in Canada in 1988.”

Thanks to global efforts, vaccines are available to protect against diseases such as influenza, whooping cough, meningitis, chickenpox, hepatitis and specific cancers.

### **Immunizations across the life span**

In B.C., young children are offered vaccines at two, four, six, 12, and 18 months of age. The vaccination process continues as children get older and begin school. A booster dose is needed for some diseases as children enter their teen years.

In grade six, all children can get the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine to protect against infection from types of human papillomavirus that cause certain cancers like cervical and mouth cancers. A 2019 study showed that the HPV vaccine cut pre-cervical cancer rates in B.C. by more than half.

The need for vaccinations does not stop as you get older, as there are many vaccines recommended for adults. All adults in B.C. can get a booster of tetanus and diphtheria vaccine every 10 years. If you missed your basic series of vaccines in childhood, or depending on your health, age and other risk factors, suggest you focus on the importance of pneumococcal and influenza as we get older as well as Zoster

“The COVID-19 pandemic has reminded us of how effective vaccines are in preventing serious illness and death,” said Dr. Carol Fenton. “This National Immunization Awareness Week, I encourage families to review their immunization records and stay on track – both to protect themselves and those around them.”

Visit our [Immunizations & Vaccines page](#) for information on important immunizations for infants, children and adults, as well as immunizations for travel. People can check their vaccine status on the [Vaccine Status Indicator](#).

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We recognize and acknowledge that we are collectively gathered on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the seven Interior Region First Nations. This region is also home to 15 Chartered Métis Communities. It is with humility that we continue to strengthen our relationships with First Nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples across the Interior.