

October 29, 2018

Press Release – For Immediate Distribution

According to Statistics Canada, Newfoundland and Labrador has the second-lowest rate for influenza vaccinations of all provinces and territories. The most recent data from 2014 indicates that immunization rate in this province was 27.8%, compared to the national average of 32.5% (<https://flunl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Flu-Shot-Fact-Sheet.pdf>)

There are many reasons why individuals may choose to receive a flu vaccination but fear of needles shouldn't be one. The Association of Psychology Newfoundland and Labrador (APNL) would like to remind the public that there are many useful strategies that psychologists can teach to help with fear of needles and other medical procedures.

Before the procedure:

- Understand your coping style – do you want to know step by step what will be involved vs “tell me when it's done”
Practice – mimic the steps involved in the procedure (may wish to use empty syringe for medical play with young children, do a trial with numbing cream)
- Use honest age appropriate language to explain procedure to children (e.g. “it will sting for a second” vs “it won't hurt”).
- Explore coping strategies to see what techniques work best for you as an individual

During the procedure:

- Use distraction techniques – individualize for each person – could be singing a song together, telling a joke with younger children; with older teens and adults engaging in a conversation listening to music, watching a video
- Deep breathing or blowing – helps to relax muscles and decrease anxiety
- Cognitive coping strategies – positive self-talk, imagery

How to get help – speak with your physician or pharmacist or visit www.apnl.ca to find a Psychologist near you who can help.

Additional useful resources can be found:

https://cpa.ca/docs/File/Publications/FactSheets/PsychologyWorksFactSheet_NeedlePain.pdf

<https://issuu.com/parentscanada1/docs/parentscanada-ad-feature-needles-do?e=32636145/58777569>

Media interviews with a Psychologist on this (or other topics), can be arranged by contacting Dr. Janine Hubbard at 682-0235 or janine@janinehubbard.com