

Give your immunity a boost for National Immunization Awareness Week

BC's ongoing measles outbreak reminds us that high immunization rates are essential to ensure that vaccine-preventable diseases don't come back

Victoria, BC - National Immunization Awareness Week takes place from April 20-27 to celebrate the important role vaccines play in preserving and protecting public health. Being fully up-to-date with all of your immunizations is the best way to safeguard yourself and help protect those around you.

About one third of children under the age of two in BC are not fully protected against one or more of the vaccine preventable diseases that could seriously harm or even kill them. Although immunization is widely heralded as a miracle of modern medicine, the spread of misinformation online has resulted in some parents choosing to skip certain vaccines or avoid immunizations altogether.

“Misinformation about vaccines can spread quickly, just like the diseases they prevent,” says Dr. Monika Naus, Medical Director for Communicable Diseases and Immunization Service at the BC Centre for Disease Control. This can lead to spread of diseases like the current BC measles outbreak that prompted the province to launch a school catch-up program to help ensure children are protected. However, with outbreaks increasing all over the world, this is not just a BC issue. The WHO declared vaccine hesitancy as one of its top ten global health threats for 2019. “We are part of a global community and these infections are just a plane ride away,” adds Naus. “That’s why it is important that we provide the most accurate information possible so that people can make an informed decision when it comes to vaccinating themselves or their children.”

Fortunately, BC has been on the forefront of vaccine advocacy and education with three interactive platforms designed to educate British Columbians about why vaccines are an important part of keeping a community healthy. ImmunizeBC.ca provides the most accurate, up-to-date and fact-based information about vaccines for the public. The site includes several interactive features including a child vaccination calendar, health unit finder and an online ‘Ask a Question’ option to answer questions from the public.

[I Boost Immunity](http://IBoostImmunity.com) (IBI) and [Kids Boost Immunity](http://KidsBoostImmunity.com) (KBI) are two digital learning platforms designed to raise literacy around vaccination for adults and children. Both platforms take a holistic approach to ‘community immunity’ by pairing local learning with a global reward: vaccines for children in need through UNICEF. Users learn about immunization through a series of online quizzes and earn vaccines for UNICEF Canada for their efforts. Both websites are brimming with good curated information – personal stories, hundreds of quiz questions and share-worthy original content based on scientific articles, essays and more—all about the importance of vaccination.

Anyone can test their immunization knowledge through a series of immunization quizzes at www.IBoostImmunity.com. For each quiz you pass, IBI will donate one vaccine to help vaccinate children in support of UNICEF Canada.

[Kids Boost Immunity](http://KidsBoostImmunity.com) makes learning fun by connecting school curriculum in science and social studies to global citizenship. The free program features interactive lessons for teachers designed to inspire digital-age students on a wide range of topics including measles, the immune system and how to evaluate online information sources. Students earn vaccines by taking quizzes to test their knowledge using a

school computer or their own device (e.g. smart phone). Learning outcomes are assessed through team and individual leaderboards that foster a friendly sense of competition in the classroom and also track student achievement.

“For immunization to work anywhere, it has to be present everywhere,” says Shannon Turner, Executive Director with the Public Health Association of BC. “Diseases don’t respect boundaries so I Boost Immunity and Kids Boost Immunity are tackling this unique public health challenge head on by rewarding individual knowledge and learning with a practical outcome that can lead to healthier lives for children around the world.”

I Boost Immunity and Kids Boost Immunity are administered by the [Public Health Association of British Columbia](#).

To learn more about immunization in BC visit www.immunizebc.ca, www.iboostimmunity.com or www.kidsboostimmunity.com.

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