

MEMO

To: Physicians Offering Influenza Vaccine

From: Dr. Janice Fitzgerald, Chief Medical Officer of Health

Date: October 6, 2023

Re: Publicly Funded Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Information for 2023-24 Season

The annual seasonal influenza immunization program is starting October 16th. Vaccine for the publicly funded program will soon be available for distribution to community-based physician's offices, community health nursing clinics, pharmacies, health facilities, staff health offices, and other healthcare professionals who are offering influenza immunizations this season.

Eligible healthcare professionals may order publicly funded vaccine through the public health offices as directed in this memo.

As per the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) recommendations, Influenza vaccine can be given at the same time as, or any time before or after, other vaccines, including live, non-live, adjuvanted or unadjuvanted vaccines for individuals 6 months of age and older. For more information, visit [NACI recommendations for the 2023-24 season](#).

Vaccine supplies needed to administer vaccine will be provided to all healthcare professionals administering influenza immunizations. To order vaccine supplies, complete the inventory requisition form and email it to: inventory.supplychain@centralhealth.nl.ca.

Recommended Recipients for Seasonal Influenza Immunization

The publicly funded seasonal influenza vaccine program provides influenza vaccine to **all individuals 6 months of age and older**. Emphasis should be placed on immunizing those who are at increased risk for complications from influenza, and individuals such as healthcare providers who are capable of transmitting influenza to those at high risk:

- All pregnant women.
- Adults and children with the following chronic health conditions:
 - cardiac or pulmonary disorders (including bronchopulmonary dysplasia, cystic fibrosis & asthma).
 - diabetes mellitus and other metabolic diseases.
 - cancer, immune compromising conditions (due to underlying disease and/or therapy).
 - renal disease.
 - anemia or hemoglobinopathy.
 - neurologic or neurodevelopment conditions
 - morbid obesity (BMI ≥ 40).

- children and adolescents (age 6 months to 18 years) undergoing treatment for long periods with acetylsalicylic acid, because of the potential increase of Reye's syndrome associated with influenza.
- People of any age who are residents of nursing homes and other chronic care facilities.
- People ≥ 65 years of age.
- All children 6 to 59 months of age (< 5 years of age).
- Indigenous Peoples.
- People capable of transmitting influenza to those at high risk, including:
 - Health care and other care providers in facilities and community settings who, through their activities, are capable of transmitting influenza to those at high risk of influenza complications.
 - Household contacts (adults and children) of individuals at high risk of influenza-related complications (whether the individual at high risk has been immunized).
 - household contacts of individuals at high risk, as listed in the section above.
 - household contacts of infants < 6 months of age as these infants are at high risk of complications from influenza but cannot receive influenza vaccine; and
 - members of a household expecting a newborn during the influenza season.
- Those providing regular childcare to children ≤ 59 months of age, whether in or out of the home.
- Those who provide services within closed or relatively closed settings to persons at high risk (e.g., crew on a ship).
- People who provide essential community services.
- People in direct contact during culling operations with poultry infected with avian influenza.

Please refer to the appropriate influenza vaccine product monographs to note product-specific age indications, precautions, and contraindications. Product monographs must be reviewed prior to administering any vaccine.

Vaccine Products for 2023-2024

Quadrivalent Influenza Vaccines (QIV)

1. FluLaval, an inactivated vaccine, will be the main product supplied by the Department of Health and Community Services (DHCS). It is available in multi-dose vials (mdv) containing 10 doses per vial. FluLaval is administered by IM injection for all persons aged six months and older.

FluLaval product monograph:

https://pdf.hres.ca/dpd_pm/00072445.PDF

DIN # 02420783

2. Fluzone, an inactivated vaccine, will also be supplied by DHCS this season in a limited supply of pre-filled syringes (pfs). Fluzone is administered by intramuscular (IM) injection for all persons aged six months and older.

Fluzone product monograph:

https://pdf.hres.ca/dpd_pm/00072481.PDF

DIN # 02432730 (mdv)

DIN # 02420643 (pfs)

3. Fluzone High-Dose, an inactivated vaccine, will be offered only to residents of long term care, personal care homes, and community care homes who are 65 years of age and older.

Fluzone High-Dose product monograph:
https://pdf.hres.ca/dpd_pm/00072470.PDF

DIN # 02500523

Administration of Influenza Vaccine to Egg Allergic Individuals:

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) has concluded that egg allergic individuals may be vaccinated against influenza using inactivated TIV or QIV, without prior influenza vaccine skin test and with the full dose, irrespective of a past severe reaction to egg and without any consideration, including immunization setting.

Immunization of Children

Children 6 months and older to less than 9 years of age receiving influenza vaccine for the first time are recommended to receive two doses of vaccine spaced at least four weeks apart. Children 6 months and older to less than 9 years of age who have been vaccinated with one or more doses of seasonal influenza vaccine in the past should receive one dose of influenza vaccine per season thereafter.

Post Immunization Observation Period

NACI recommends a post vaccination observation period of at least 15 minutes before leaving the vaccine clinic area.

Adverse Events Following Immunization

All Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFIs) are to be reported to the public health. For more information, please refer to the [provincial immunization manual](#).

The national AEFI form can be found by accessing the following link:
<https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/immunization/aefi-form-july23-2020-eng.pdf>

Vaccine Ordering Process

The distribution and supply of vaccine will be monitored very closely by public health staff within HCS as well as NLHS.

Orders will be filled to the best of their ability. Please have measures in place to reduce wastage. It is imperative that you not overstock vaccine which could lead to vaccine wastage.

Please contact Communicable Disease Control staff in the area closest to you to arrange for an order of influenza vaccine:

EASTERN ZONE			
Mount Pearl Square Vaccine Depot Telephone: 709-752-4886 cdcprogramfax@easternhealth.ca Fax: 709-752-4873	Holyrood Vaccine Depot Telephone: 709-229-1572 Fax: 709-229-1589	Clarenville Vaccine Depot Telephone: 709-466-5716 Fax: 709-466-5718	Marystown Vaccine Depot Telephone: 709-279-7935 Fax: 709-279-7936
CENTRAL ZONE			
Telephone: 709-651-6238 Fax: 709-651-6483			
WESTERN ZONE			
Telephone: 709-784-5417 Fax: 709-637-5160			
LABRADOR-GRENFELL ZONE			
Telephone: 709-285-8410/709-897-3110 Fax: 709-896-4393			

Influenza vaccine must be ordered using the ***Influenza Vaccine Order Form***. Fax the order form to the Communicable Disease Control Office in your zone (as per contact information above). You will be contacted when your order is ready for pick-up.

Vaccine Storage and Cold Chain Monitoring

Vaccine temperature must be maintained between 2°C to 8°C at all times. Vaccine viability may be compromised if not stored properly. Insulated coolers and sufficient supply of ice packs will be required when picking up vaccine. Vaccine will not be released without the proper equipment for transportation.

Vaccine must be stored properly in the clinic environment to ensure it remains at the appropriate temperature. Please see the document, ***Influenza Vaccine Storage and Handing Factsheet at Flu - Time For The Shot*** for detailed storage guidelines. You can also visit section 7.3 of the NL Immunization Manual: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/hcs/files/publichealth-cdc-im-section7-biological-products.pdf>

Influenza Documentation and Data Entry

Healthcare providers have a responsibility to ensure proper documentation of influenza vaccine administration. Each time an influenza vaccination is administered it must be documented.

For Med Access users, a standardized documentation template is available within Med Access and must be used for billing purposes. **For non-Med Access users**, an EMR “light” solution has been created by the NL Health Services-Digital health (formerly the Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information (NLCHI)). Education on how to use this solution will be made available and support will be provided by NL Health Services-Digital health. Please email

info@edocsnl.ca for further information. If a physician is unable to use EMR or EMR light, paper documentation can be used. Influenza consent forms are available at [Time for the Shot](#) website. Completed Influenza consent forms should be batched and submitted biweekly to NL Health Services-Digital health:

Influenza Vaccination Clinic Forms
70 O'Leary Avenue
St. John's, NL
A1B 2C7

Batches may be transferred to NL Health Services-Digital health via courier service at no charge or alternatively, by in-person drop-off. The custodian of personal health information must ensure that this transfer of information is following the Personal Health Information Act. To arrange courier service at no cost to the physician please contact Susan Peach at susan.peach@nlchi.nl.ca