

Population and Public Health Division

Health Care Provider Q & A 2017/2018 Universal Influenza Immunization Program

This fact sheet is intended for informational purposes only. It is not intended to provide medical or legal advice.

A. Universal Influenza Immunization Program

1. What is the Universal Influenza Immunization Program (UIIP)?

Ontario's Universal Influenza Immunization Program (UIIP), introduced in 2000, offers influenza vaccine free of charge each year to all persons six months of age and older who live, work or go to school in Ontario.

2. Where and how can Ontarians access publicly funded influenza vaccine?

The influenza vaccine is available at no cost to the public through their primary care provider, public health unit clinics, pharmacies, and in various other settings such as long-term care homes, workplaces, hospitals and community health centres. During the influenza season, Ontarians can visit <http://www.ontario.ca/flu> and use the Flu Vaccine Locator Tool to find an influenza immunization clinic nearby.

People may be required to provide proof that they live, work or attend school in Ontario to receive the vaccine. Many different identification (ID) documents are accepted to prove eligibility. If the influenza vaccine is being administered at a doctor's office or pharmacy, a valid Ontario Health Card must be provided.

B. Influenza

3. How many people typically become infected with influenza every year?

An average of 23,000 laboratory-confirmed cases of influenza are reported to the FluWatch program each year, Canada's national surveillance system that monitors the spread of flu and flu-like illnesses.

4. How many people in Ontario are hospitalized or die of influenza every year?

Influenza and pneumonia are ranked among the top 10 leading causes of death among the Canadian population. According to Canada's National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI), 12,200 influenza related hospitalizations occur on average in Canada each year. The actual numbers can vary from year to year depending on the severity of the influenza season. Since Ontario represents 39% of the Canadian population and assuming that influenza-related hospitalizations are distributed evenly across the country, it is estimated that there would be an average of approximately 4,750 influenza-associated hospitalizations per year in Ontario.

According to NACI, there are approximately 3,500 deaths related to influenza on average each year in Canada. Again, as Ontario represents 39% of the Canadian population, it is estimated that there would be an average of approximately 1,365 influenza-associated deaths per year in Ontario. The highest mortality rate typically occurs among adults 65 years of age and older.

5. Who is most at risk from complications due to influenza and should be vaccinated?

Individuals in the following high risk groups (unless contraindicated) are recommended to receive the influenza vaccine:

- Individuals at high risk of influenza-related complications or more likely to require hospitalization:
 - All pregnant women
 - People who are residents of nursing homes or other chronic care facilities
 - People ≥ 65 years of age
 - All children 6-59 months of age
 - Indigenous peoples
 - Adults or children with chronic health conditions as follows:
 - cardiac or pulmonary disorders
 - diabetes mellitus or other metabolic disease
 - cancer
 - conditions which compromise the immune system
 - renal disease
 - anemia or hemoglobinopathy
 - neurologic or neurodevelopmental conditions
 - morbid obesity (body mass index of ≥ 40)
 - children and adolescents (6 months to 18 years) undergoing treatment with acetylsalicylic acid for long periods
- Individuals capable of transmitting influenza to those at high risk:
 - Health care workers and other care providers in facilities and community settings
 - Household contacts (adults and children) of individuals at high risk of influenza related complications
 - Persons who provide care to children ≤ 59 months of age.
 - Those who provide services within a closed or relatively closed setting to persons at high risk (e.g., crew on a ship)

- In addition, the ministry strongly recommends that swine and poultry industry workers receive influenza immunization as early as possible.

C. 2017/2018 Universal Influenza Immunization Program

6. Which influenza vaccines will be publicly funded in 2017/2018?

For the 2017/2018 UIIP, Ontario will be offering the following publicly funded influenza vaccines: Influvac, Fluvrial, FluLaval, Fluzone and FluMist.

Table 1: Publicly funded influenza vaccines available through the 2017/18 UIIP

Vaccine	Trivalent Inactivated Vaccines (TIVs)		Quadrivalent Inactivated Vaccines (QIVs)		Quadrivalent - Live Attenuated Vaccine (Q-LAIV)
	Fluviral®	Influvac®	FluLaval Tetra®	Fluzone® Quadrivalent	FluMist® Quadrivalent
Dosage	0.5mL	0.5 mL	0.5 mL	0.5 mL	0.2 mL (0.1mL per nostril)
Format	Multi-dose vial	Pre-filled syringes	Multi-dose vial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-dose vial • Pre-filled syringe 	Pre-filled single use sprayer
Administration Route	Intramuscular Injection	Intramuscular Injection	Intramuscular Injection	Intramuscular Injection	Intranasal spray
Age Indications <small>(per product monograph) Please see UIIP eligibility table below</small>	≥6 months	≥3 years	≥6 months	≥6 months	2 to 59 years
*Potential Allergens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egg Protein • Formaldehyde • Thimerosal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egg Protein • Chicken Protein • Formaldehyde • Gentamicin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egg Protein • Formaldehyde • Thimerosal 	Multi-dose: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egg Protein • Formaldehyde • Thimerosal Pre-filled: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egg Protein • Formaldehyde 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arginine • Egg Protein • Gelatin • Gentamicin
Post-Puncture Shelf Life	28 Days	N/A	28 Days	Multi-dose: Up to expiry date indicated on vial Pre-filled: N/A	N/A
Package Dimensions in cm (l x w x h)	3 x 3 x 7	18.8 x 15.2 x 1.7	3 x 3 x 6	Multi-dose: 3.6 x 2.9 x 6 Pre-filled: 10.4 x 8.9 x 3.8	10.6 x 17.6 x 2.9

Table 2: Vaccines for Specific Age Groups										
Age Group	Recommended Vaccine					Alternative Vaccine (if requested or if recommended vaccine is not available)				
	TIV		QIV		Q-LAIV	TIV		QIV		Q-LAIV
	Influvac	Fluviral	FluLaval	Fluzone	Flumist	Influvac	Fluviral	FluLaval	Fluzone	Flumist
6 to 23 months			✓	✓			✓			
2 to 17 years			✓	✓	✓	✓ (≥ 3 years)	✓			
≥18 years	✓	✓								

Note: NACI has not identified any preference among TIV and QIV products.

Table 3: Recommended needle gauge and length for vaccine recipient: Intramuscular Injections (IM)		
Vaccine Recipient	Infants, Toddlers and Older children	Adolescents and Adults
Recommended needle gauge	22-25	22-25
Recommended needle length	7/8 – 1 inch	1- 1 1/2 inch

Important Notes:

- Publicly funded influenza vaccines must be administered by a regulated health care professional.
- Publicly funded vaccine must not be administered to individuals outside the eligibility criteria or to individuals with contraindications to the vaccine.
- Trained pharmacists may only administer publicly funded influenza vaccine to individuals 5 years of age and older.
- In children without a medical reason that prevents them from receiving the influenza vaccine, a quadrivalent vaccine – one that protects against four strains of the flu virus - is recommended, either the quadrivalent live attenuated influenza vaccine (Q- LAIV) or quadrivalent injectable inactivated influenza vaccine (QIV) vaccine.
- The current evidence does not support the preferential use of LAIV in children and adolescents 2-17 years of age. For more information, please see: NACI's *Addendum-LAIV Use in Children and Adolescents* (<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/naci-ccni/flu-2016-grippe-addendum-children-enfants-eng.php>) and the *Canadian Immunization Guide Chapter on Influenza and Statement on Seasonal Influenza Vaccine for 2017-2018* (<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/healthy-living/canadian-immunization-guide-statement-seasonal-influenza-vaccine-2017-2018.html>)

7. Which strains of influenza are covered by the 2017/2018 influenza vaccines?

For the Northern Hemisphere's 2017/2018 season, the WHO has recommended the following strains be included in the trivalent vaccine:

- A/Michigan/45/2015 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus;
- A/Hong Kong/4801/2014 (H3N2)-like virus; and
- B/Brisbane/60/2008-like virus.

For the quadrivalent vaccines containing two influenza B viruses, the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that they contain the above three viruses and a B/Phuket/3073/2013-like virus.

8. Is this season's vaccine a good match for influenza viruses?

Influenza vaccine effectiveness can vary from year to year and it's not yet possible to predict with certainty if this year's vaccine will be a good match for circulating viruses. The vaccine is made to protect against the flu viruses that research and surveillance indicates will likely be most common during the season. Influenza viruses change constantly (called drift) – they can change from one season to the next or they can even change within the course of one flu season.

Influenza Vaccine Ordering and Distribution

Please visit the ministry website at www.ontario.ca/influenza for details on ordering publicly funded influenza vaccine.

For additional information on influenza or the vaccine, please visit the following websites or call your local public health unit:

- a. Ontario's Universal Influenza Immunization Program: www.ontario.ca/influenza
- b. Government of Canada - National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) Statement on Seasonal Influenza Vaccine: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci.html#rec>
- c. Immunize Canada: www.immunize.cpha.ca
- d. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): Seasonal Influenza: www.cdc.gov/flu

For a list of public health unit locations, please visit:

<http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/phu/locations.aspx>

ServiceOntario, INFOline: 1-877-234-4343 toll free in Ontario (TTY: 1-800-387-5559)

Version française disponible en communiquant avec le 1 877 234-4343 ATS: 1 800 387-5559 (web site: www.health.gov.on.ca/fr/ccom/flu/)