



Influenza Vaccines

(FluLaval Tetra®, Fluzone Quadrivalent®, Afluria® Tetra,
Fluzone High Dose®)

Who should get the Influenza vaccine?

Everyone who is six months of age or older should get the flu shot every year, unless there is a medical reason why they cannot receive it.

It is highly recommended that the following groups of people get the flu shot, as they have a higher risk of complications if they get the flu:

- people with underlying health conditions
- residents of nursing homes/chronic care facilities
- people 65 years of age and older
- children six to 59 months of age
- pregnant women
- Indigenous peoples

It is also highly recommended that the following groups get the flu shot, as they care for those who are at high risk of complications, and could pass the virus on to them:

- health care providers
- household members of those at high-risk of influenza-related complications
- people providing regular care to children less than 5 years of age
- people who provide essential community services

Influenza vaccine is also strongly recommended for people who work in the swine and poultry industry.

*For those 65 years+: There are two vaccines available for you. QIV which protects against 4 strains of Influenza (2 A strains & 2 B strains) and High Dose TIV which provides a high dose but protects against 3 strains of Influenza (2 A strains & 1 B strain). Discuss this with your health care provider which vaccine is best for you.

How well does this vaccine work?

When there is a good match between the influenza strains in the vaccine and those circulating in the community, the vaccine can prevent influenza illness in **about 60%** of healthy children and adults.

Influenza viruses are always changing. Flu vaccines are updated every year to protect against the strains of the virus that we expect to see each year. That's why it is important for you to get vaccinated every year.

Studies have shown that influenza immunization decreases the number of physician visits, hospitalizations and deaths in high risk persons.

It takes about two weeks for the flu vaccine to be most effective in your body to fight influenza; protection may last up to one year.

People who receive the vaccine can still get influenza, but if they do, it is usually milder.

The vaccine will not protect against other illnesses that may be mistaken for influenza (i.e. stomach flu, cold).

Is there an alternative to this vaccine?

Getting the flu vaccine is the best way to prevent the flu. Other steps you can take to prevent influenza infection include:

- Clean your hands often
- Cover your cough and sneeze
- Clean shared surfaces well and often
- Stay home when you are sick

Is this vaccine safe?

Like any medicine, the flu vaccine is capable of causing side effects, most of which are mild like soreness, redness or swelling at the injection site. The risk of the influenza vaccine causing serious side effects is extremely small. The risk of getting the flu and suffering serious complications is much greater. Life-threatening allergic reactions are very rare.

If you experience any worse side effect, seek medical advice and notify the health unit.

Oculorespiratory Syndrome (ORS)

During the 2000-2001 season, a small number of people who received influenza vaccine developed a side effect called Oculorespiratory Syndrome (ORS); red eyes and/or respiratory symptoms (cough, wheeze, chest tightness, difficulty breathing, difficulty swallowing, hoarseness or sore throat).

Persons who experienced ORS symptoms in the past may safely be re-immunized with influenza vaccine except those who experienced **severe lower respiratory symptoms** (wheeze, chest tightness, difficulty breathing) within 24 hours of influenza immunization. These individuals should seek expert medical advice before being immunized again with the influenza vaccine. Since 2000-2001, fewer cases of ORS have been reported.

Guillain-Barré Syndrome (or GBS)

GBS is a rare disorder where a person's own immune system damages nerve cells, causing muscle weakness and sometimes paralysis. It most commonly occurs following an infection.

On very rare occasions, an individual may develop GBS in days or weeks following an immunization. However, just because the person develops GBS does not mean that the vaccine caused GBS.

Studies have shown the absolute risk of GBS after influenza immunization is about one excess case per 1 million flu vaccines administered above the rate at which GBS occurs in the general population.

Who should not get the Influenza Vaccine?

- Infants under 6 months of age
- Those who have had a severe allergic reaction to a previous dose of flu vaccine or any of the vaccine components listed below, with the exception of egg. **People with egg allergies can receive influenza vaccine.**
- Those who have had GBS within 6 weeks of receiving a previous influenza vaccine
- People who have experienced severe lower respiratory symptoms should consult with their healthcare provider

Potential Allergen	Also found in...	Flulaval® Tetra	Fluzone® Quadrivalent	Afluria® Tetra	High Dose Fluzone®
Egg Protein	Eggs	√	√	√	√
Thimerosal	Eye solutions, Topical medications	√	√ multi dose vials only		
Antibiotics				Neomycin Polymyxin B	

For a full listing of all ingredients in each vaccine, refer to the Canadian Immunization Guide, Part 1 – Key Immunization Information: Contents of Immunizing Agents Available for Use in Canada.

Reference:

National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI): Canadian Immunization Guide Chapter on Influenza and Statement on Seasonal Influenza Vaccine for 2019-2020.

What else do I need to know?

If you are looking for more information about influenza or any of the influenza vaccines, please contact Your Health Connection 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520, or visit our website at www.simcoemuskokahealth.org