

Dr. Charles Gardner, Medical Officer of Health
 Dr. Colin Lee, Associate Medical Officer of Health
 Dr. Lisa Simon, Associate Medical Officer of Health

Universal Influenza Immunization Program (UIIP) 2023-2024

Attention: Participating UIIP Pharmacies, Ontario Health Central

Date: September 18, 2023

Information about the local rollout of COVID-19 XBB vaccine and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) vaccine will be shared via separate Public Health Alerts as soon as we receive more information from the Ministry of Health. As per the Ministry of Health press release this week, RSV vaccine will be available for residents of long-term care homes, elder care lodges and some retirement home residents this fall. To support facilities planning, it is expected that RSV vaccine will need to be given at least 14 days following COVID or flu vaccine, so administration is likely to be later in October.

The following Influenza vaccines will be available publicly funded in Ontario this flu season:

Age Group	QIV		QIV-HD	TIV-adj
	FluLaval Tetra	Fluzone® Quadrivalent	Fluzone® High-Dose Quadrivalent	Fluad®
6 months to 64 years	✓	✓		
≥ 65 years	✓	✓	✓	✓

Strains of influenza in the vaccine products offered in the 2023/2024 UIIP:

Influenza Strains	Egg-based QIVs	Egg-based TIVs (Fluad®)
A/Victoria/4897/2022 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus;	NEW For 2023/2024	NEW For 2023/2024
A/Darwin/9/2021 (H3N2)-like virus;	✓	✓
B/Austria/1359417/2021 (B/Victoria lineage)-like virus;	✓	✓
B/Phuket/3073/2013 (B/Yamagata lineage)-like virus.	✓	



Who Should Receive the Influenza Vaccine?

Per NACI recommendations for influenza and to optimize co-administration with COVID-19 vaccine, health care workers, first responders, and the following individuals at high risk of influenza-related complications or who are more likely to require hospitalization, should be prioritized to receive the influenza vaccine as soon as vaccine is available:

- Residents and staff of congregate living settings (e.g. chronic care facilities, retirement homes)
- People ≥ 65 years of age
- All pregnant individuals
- All children 6 months to 4 years of age
- Individuals who are from a First Nation, Inuit or Métis community, and/or who self-identify as First Nation, Inuit or Métis, and their household members
- Members of racialized and other equity deserving communities
- Individuals 6 months of age and older with the following underlying health conditions:
 - Cardiac or pulmonary disorders
 - Diabetes mellitus or other metabolic disease
 - Cancer
 - Conditions or medication which compromise the immune system
 - Renal disease
 - Anemia or hemoglobinopathy
 - Neurologic or neurodevelopment conditions
 - Morbid obesity (body mass index of ≥40)
 - Children and adolescents (6 months to 18 years) undergoing treatment with acetylsalicylic acid for long periods

The influenza vaccine is recommended for all people six months of age and older without contraindications, however, per NACI, individuals in the following three groups are particularly recommended to receive the influenza vaccine:

- Individuals capable of transmitting influenza to those listed above and/or to infants under 6 months of age:
 - 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 ≤ 4 years of age
 - Members of a household expecting a newborn during the influenza season
 - Those who provide services within a closed or relatively closed setting to persons at high risk of influenza related complications (e.g. crew on a ship)
- People who provide essential community services
- Poultry industry workers

How Many Doses of Influenza Vaccine are Needed for Protection?

Age		Number of doses recommended
6 months to under 9 years of age	<i>Not previously immunized</i> with any influenza vaccine in their lifetime	2 doses at least 4 weeks apart ¹
	<i>Previously immunized</i> with at least one dose of any influenza vaccine in their lifetime	1 dose
9 years of age and older		1 dose

¹ It is not necessary to use the same vaccine product for both doses.

Publicly Funded Influenza Vaccines for Anyone 6 Months of Age and Older

	Quadrivalent Inactivated Vaccines (QIV)	
Vaccine product	FluLaval Tetra	Fluzone® Quadrivalent
Age indication	≥ 6 months	≥ 6 months
Manufacturer	GSK	Sanofi Pasteur
Vaccine Type	Egg-based	Egg-based
Micrograms of hemagglutinin	15 µg	15 µg
Dosage	0.5 mL	0.5 mL
Format	MDV (multi-dose vial – stable for 28 days once punctured)	MDV (multi-dose vial – stable for 28 days once punctured) PFS (pre-filled syringe)
Route	Intramuscular (IM) injection	Intramuscular (IM) injection
Most common allergens¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egg protein² • Thimerosal (<i>multi-dose vial only</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egg protein² • Thimerosal (<i>multi-dose vial only</i>)

¹ Any component in a vaccine may be a potential allergen. This table identifies the most common allergens.

² The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) indicates that egg allergy is not a contraindication for influenza vaccination and that egg-allergic individuals may be vaccinated against influenza using the full dose of any age-appropriate product. See section IV of the Canadian Immunization Guide chapter on Influenza and statement on seasonal influenza vaccine for 2018-2019 for studies supporting the NACI recommendation for egg-allergic individuals (www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/naci-ccni/#rec).

Which Influenza Vaccine Should Individuals ≥ 65 Years of Age Receive?

The QIV, QIV-HD and TIV-adj all protect against the flu, and the most important thing is for older adults to be vaccinated as soon as vaccine is available. **Do not delay vaccination to wait for a particular product.**

For individual-level decision making, **NACI states that when available, high-dose (QIV-HD) should be used over standard-dose (QIV) inactivated influenza vaccine, given the burden of influenza A (H3N2) disease and the good evidence of better protection compared to standard-dose in adults 65 years of age and older.**

However, NACI states that in the absence of a specific product, any of the available age-appropriate influenza vaccines should be used. **There is NO PREFERENTIAL RECOMMENDATION for the use of QIV-HD versus TIV-adj vaccine for this age group.** To date, no studies have directly compared QIV-HD and TIV-adj formulations or TIV-adj and QIV formulations. The following information should be considered when discussing vaccine options:

- There is insufficient evidence to make a preferential recommendation between QIV-HD and TIV-adj. There is good evidence of QIV-HD providing better protection compared to QIV standard dose.
- In considering use of TIV-adj and QIV standard dose, given the increased burden of disease associated with influenza A(H3N2) in older adults, better protection against influenza A(H3N2) afforded by the TIV-adj may be more important, especially in those with multiple co-morbid conditions and compromised health status. However, most importantly, do not delay vaccination to wait for a particular product.

Publicly Funded Influenza Vaccines for Anyone 65 Years of Age and Older Only

	High-Dose Quadrivalent Inactivated Vaccine (QIV-HD)	Adjuvanted Trivalent Inactivated Vaccine (TIV-adj)
Vaccine product	Fluzone® High-Dose Quadrivalent	Fluad®
Age indication	≥ 65 years	≥ 65 years
Manufacturer	Sanofi Pasteur	Seqirus
Vaccine Type	Egg-based	Egg-based
Micrograms of hemagglutinin	60 µg	15 µg
Dosage	0.7 mL	0.5 mL
Adjuvant	No	Yes
Format	PFS (pre-filled syringe)	PFS (pre-filled syringe)
Route	Intramuscular (IM) injection	Intramuscular (IM) injection
Most common allergens¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egg protein² 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egg protein² • Neomycin • Kanamycin

¹ Any component in a vaccine may be a potential allergen. This table identifies the most common allergens.

² The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) indicates that egg allergy is not a contraindication for influenza vaccination and that egg-allergic individuals may be vaccinated against influenza using the full dose of any age-appropriate product. See section IV of the Canadian Immunization Guide chapter on Influenza and statement on seasonal influenza vaccine for 2018-2019 for studies supporting the NACI recommendation for egg-allergic individuals (www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/naci-ccni/#rec).

Fluzone® Quadrivalent and Fluzone® High-Dose Quadrivalent (QIV-HD) are *different products*. **Fluzone® High-Dose Quadrivalent (QIV-HD) is only authorized for those 65 years of age and older.** Please use caution when administering Fluzone® products to ensure that the right vaccine is being administered to the right person.

Co-administration with Other Vaccines

Influenza vaccines may be given on the same day, or at any time before or after other vaccines (including COVID-19 vaccines) for anyone 6 months of age and older.

No studies have been conducted that have assessed the co-administration of **Shingrix** with adjuvanted or high-dose influenza vaccines. With Fluad®, it is unknown how the adjuvants may interact when Shingrix is co-administered.

Reporting Adverse Events

An [Adverse Event Following Immunization \(AEFI\) form](#) must be filled out and faxed to the Immunization Program's fax line at **705-726-3962** for follow-up as soon as possible following any unexpected adverse events. See Public Health Ontario's [AEFI Reporting Fact Sheet](#) for more information.

Important Reminders for Pharmacies

Health care providers are only to immunize those in the high-risk groups outlined on page 2 until the annual influenza program is officially launched by the Ministry of Health, which usually occurs ~November 1st. Once the Ministry of Health launches the annual UIIP, vaccine can be administered to the general population.

Weekly temperature log sheets must be submitted to Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit **every Monday by 12 noon, starting Monday, September 25, 2023** (if not already doing so) via:

- ✓ **Fax: 705-726-3962** *or* **Email: vaccineorders@smdhu.org**

When **submitting your log sheets for the first time, please include the previous 4 weeks.**

- ✓ Temperature readings must be done and recorded in the logbook twice a day, every day while your pharmacy is open (including dates and times of readings).
- ✓ If you recently had your inspection and do not have 4 weeks of temperature logs, please submit at least five consecutive days of twice daily fridge temperatures so your initial order can be filled.

Please clearly write your pharmacy name and store number on the temperature log. Failure to do so may result in suspension (as we may be unable to identify which store submitted the temperature log).

Additional Resources

For more information, please visit our website at www.smdhu.org/hpportal or contact the Immunization Program at 705-721-7520 or toll free at 1-877-721-7520.

- For questions regarding vaccine orders: ext. 8808 or vaccineorders@smdhu.org
- For all other HCP questions: ext. 8806 or hc.vpd@smdhu.org
- Submitting temperature logs: ext. 8808 or vaccineorders@smdhu.org