



**Office of the
Chief Medical
Health Officer**

September 28, 2016

2016-17 Seasonal Influenza Immunization Campaign begins in October

Please see the Island Health (VIHA) web site at www.viha.ca/flu for information about the 2016-17 Seasonal Influenza Immunization Campaign and vaccine order forms. Click on the “Community Vaccine Providers” link on the left-hand side of the page.

Immunization Campaign Dates:

Seasonal influenza vaccine will be delivered to BC in October. Public health immunization clinics are scheduled to begin the week of October 31, 2016. Vaccine will be distributed to physician offices, pharmacists, and other community vaccine providers in advance of this date as it arrives on Vancouver Island. Please place your order for vaccine as soon as possible through your local health unit and plan to begin vaccinating after October 17 in order to allow time for vaccine to be distributed.

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Vaccines and recommended usage:

This year’s influenza vaccine contains strains that have *changed* from last year’s vaccine. The vaccine will contain:

- A/California/7/2009 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus (unchanged from previous year)
- A/Hong Kong/4801/2014 (H3N2)-like virus (new strain)
- B/Brisbane/60/2008-like virus (new to the trivalent vaccine)
- B/Phuket/3073/2013-like virus (in quadrivalent vaccines only)

A reminder that eligibility for publicly funded vaccine has expanded to include the following people:

- Visitors to healthcare facilities and other patient care locations

Vaccine Product	Recommended Patient Groups	Comments
Agri-flu®	Adults 18 years + (Can be given to children 6 months +)	Supplied in single dose vials, larger packaging
Flu-viral®	Adults 18 years + (Can be given to children 6 months +)	Multidose vials. Once opened, vials can be used for 28 days.
Flulaval Tetra® Quadri-valent	Children age 6 months-17 years including those who have contraindications to Flumist®	Injectable vaccine
Flumist® Quad-ri-valent	Children age 2-17 years with no contraindications to attenuated live vaccine	Inhaled nasal vaccine
Fluad®	Seniors living in long-term care facilities	Vaccine will be supplied directly to long term care facilities. Limited supply.

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) has revised the recommendations for influenza vaccines for children this year.

This season **Flumist® Quadrivalent**, a live attenuated intranasal vaccine (LAIV), and **Flulaval Tetra® Quadrivalent** will be available as the *preferred vaccines* for eligible children. The trivalent vaccines (Agriflu® and Fluviral®) can be given to children if the other vaccines are not available. A quadrivalent vaccine with additional influenza B protection is *preferred* for the pediatric population given the burden of influenza B disease on children. The current evidence does not support a recommendation for the *preferential* use of LAIV (Flumist®) over QIV (Flulaval Tetra®) in children and adolescents 2-17 years of age.

In adults, the inactivated vaccine is equivalent or more efficacious than LAIV, and thus TIV vaccines are recommended. Adults who wish to receive LAIV may do so, but must purchase the vaccine privately.

Fluad® will be supplied in limited quantities for seniors in long-term care facilities. **Fluad®** is not available to community vaccine providers but will be supplied automatically to elderly residents in long term care.

Other seasonal influenza vaccines have been approved by Health Canada for this season and may be available for private purchase. Fluzone® High Dose, Vaxigrip® and Influvac® are trivalent intramuscular (IM) preparations without adjuvant. Fluad® Pediatric is an adjuvanted trivalent vaccine.

Update on egg allergy and influenza vaccine

Since 2013, anyone with egg allergy, even severe or anaphylactic egg allergy can safely receive any inactivated influenza vaccine (TIV or QIV). As of this year, the intranasal live attenuate vaccine (LAIV) can also be given safely to those with severe egg allergy.

Antiviral Use:

Neuraminidase inhibitors (oseltamivir and zanamivir) remain the recommended drugs of choice for treatment or prophylaxis against influenza A or B for the 2016/17 season. Due to persistent resistance to amantadine among the majority of circulating influenza strains, it is not recommended for treatment or prophylaxis at this time. Recommendations on antiviral use may be updated during the influenza season as more clinical information becomes available. Updates will be sent to physicians via the Island Health website and directly by fax.

Outbreak Prevention & Management:

During confirmed influenza outbreaks in long term care facilities, physicians may be asked to prescribe antiviral prophylaxis for **residents** (vaccinated and unvaccinated), and **unvaccinated staff**. If you have patients in residential care, please ensure that orders are in place for influenza immunization, and PRN orders for antiviral prophylaxis, and creatinine clearance tests (within the last year) for residents with suspected or confirmed renal impairment.

Please provide antiviral prophylaxis to unvaccinated **healthcare workers** requesting prophylaxis during an influenza outbreak at their workplace. Be aware that workers who do not take prophylaxis during an outbreak may not be permitted to work, as this is part of the outbreak control measures. Antiviral prophylaxis has been shown to successfully interrupt transmission during facility outbreaks.

Island Health Influenza Protection Policy:

The Island Health Influenza Protection policy is aimed at enhancing patient safety by improving influenza vaccination coverage among health care workers. All healthcare workers in Island Health and Island Health affiliated facilities are expected to comply with the policy this year. There are no anticipated significant policy changes this year. Healthcare workers may receive their influenza immunization from any provider including physicians or pharmacists. Healthcare workers are expected to self report their immunization status to their workplace. Island Health employees and physicians will be reporting immunization status through a centralized website. **All vaccine providers should provide a written record of vaccination to healthcare workers at the time of vaccination** for this season. More information about the policy can be found on the Island Health website.

Resources for physicians & other community providers:

Information documents and links with more detailed information for physicians and other community providers will be available on the Island Health Influenza website (www.viha.ca/flu). The links will include information on:

- Online training and refresher courses on influenza vaccine and administration for all vaccine providers
- 2016/17 Eligibility for Publicly Funded Vaccine
- Flulaval Tetra® Quadrivalent Information
- FluMist® Quadrivalent Information and Instructions
- Vaccine Product Information from BCCDC including dosage and composition
- Antiviral Guidelines for general use and in Long Term Care facilities
- Laboratory Diagnosis of Influenza

Important forms will also be posted on the VIHA Influenza website (www.viha.ca/flu) including:

- Influenza Vaccine order forms
- Influenza Vaccine reporting form (fridge count) to be submitted by community vaccine providers by mid-January, 2017- this replaces the older reporting forms

Yours in health,

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Medical Health Officer