



**Office of the
Chief Medical
Health Officer**

NORTH ISLAND

250.331.8591

Charmaine Enns
MD, MHSc, FRCPC
355 – 11th Street
Courtenay, BC V9N 1S4

CENTRAL ISLAND

250.739.6304

Paul Hasselback
MD, MSc, FRCPC
3RD Floor 6475 Metral Drive
Nanaimo, BC V9T 2L9

COWICHAN REGION

250.850.2100

LOC. 45528

Shannon Waters
MD, MHSc, FRCPC
675 Canada Ave
Duncan, BC V9L 1T9

SOUTH ISLAND

250.519.3406

Richard Stanwick, CMHO
MD, MSc, FRCPC, FAAP

Murray Fyfe
MD, MSc, FRCPC

Dee Hoyano
MD, FRCPC

430 – 1900 Richmond Ave.
Victoria, BC V8R 4R2

AFTER HOURS ON CALL

1.800.204.6166

**MEDICAL HEALTH OFFICERS'
NEWSLETTER
No. 308**

September 23, 2019

INFLUENZA PREVENTION AND CONTROL 2019-2020—LTC FACILITIES

Dear Director of Care:

Please see the Island Health website at <http://www.islandhealth.ca/flu> for information about the 2019 - 2020 Seasonal Influenza Campaign. For long term care specific information click on the “Long term Facilities” button on the webpage.

All vaccine order forms, reporting forms and vaccine information will be online. Additional information about outbreak preparation and management will also be accessible via this website.

Seasonal influenza vaccine will be delivered to BC in early October. Vaccine will be distributed to long term care facilities as it arrives on Vancouver Island; anticipated distribution to begin **October 7**. Please place your order for vaccine as soon as possible through your local health unit and plan to **begin vaccinating your residents and staff as soon as vaccine is available** to your facility. Public health immunization clinics are scheduled to begin the week of October 28, 2019.

Vaccines and recommended usage:

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

- A/Brisbane/02/2018 (H1N1) pdm09-like virus (new)
- A/Kansas/14/2017 (H3N2)-like virus (new)
- B/Colorado/06/2017-like virus
- B/Phuket/3073/2013-like virus (in quadrivalent vaccines only)

Two publicly funded vaccine products will be distributed on Vancouver Island for use in adult long term care facilities.

Fluviral® (GSK) is a split-virus inactivated vaccine and contains thimerosal as a preservative. It comes packaged in a multi-dose vial without syringes. Once the product vial is opened, vaccine must be used within 28 days. It can be used for adults and children six months of age and older.

Agriflu® (Seqirus Canada) is a subunit inactivated vaccine. It can be used for adults and children 6 months and older. It is thimerosal free and should be used in those with known hypersensitivity to thimerosal. Because **Agriflu®** is supplied in single dose vials, it *requires approximately 10 times more space* than an equivalent number of **Fluviral®** doses. Clinician’s offices should be aware of this when planning for transport and storage of their vaccine supply.

The following summarizes which vaccine should be administered to residents and staff:

- Residents of any age should receive **Fluviral® or Agriflu®**
- Staff should receive **Fluviral® or Agriflu®**

There will be no publicly funded Fluzone® High Dose available this year but it may be available for private purchase through pharmacies. This year the National Advisory Committee on Immunization has recommended Fluzone® High Dose for seniors (at the individual level, not programmatic) because of the expectation of higher protectiveness. For more information about Fluzone® High Dose see http://www.bccdc.ca/resource-gallery/Documents/Guidelines%20and%20Forms/Guidelines%20and%20Manuals/Immunization/Vaccine%20Info/FluzoneHD_QandA.pdf

Fluad®, another influenza vaccine targeted for seniors, and Influvac® may also be available for private purchase through pharmacies. Two other quadrivalent influenza vaccines (containing 4 strains) will be available through the public campaign- Flulaval® Tetra and Fluzone® Quadrivalent, which are funded for children only. Flumist® is not available in Canada this season.

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) or the intranasal live attenuate vaccine (LAIV).

Antiviral Use:

Antivirals have been successfully used in the majority of confirmed influenza outbreaks in the past few years and we recommend its use to minimize the impact of the outbreak on residents.

Antivirals are available from community retail pharmacies for use during facility outbreaks. Please consult this year with your pharmacy to develop or review your outbreak antiviral plan, so that all residents will have prompt access to antivirals in the event of an outbreak. Some advance joint planning with clear steps to take during regular hours as well as weekend and holiday periods will ensure that antivirals can be initiated promptly and protect residents during influenza outbreaks. Staffing plans for the event of an outbreak are also highly recommended.

Neuraminidase inhibitors (oseltamivir and zanamivir) remain the recommended drugs of choice for treatment or prophylaxis against influenza A or B for this season. Recommendations on antiviral use may be updated during the influenza season as more clinical information becomes available. Updates will be sent to Directors of Care via the VIHA website and directly by letter.

Please ensure that physician orders are in place for antiviral prophylaxis, including up to date creatinine clearance tests (within the last year) ONLY for residents with suspected or confirmed renal impairment. Ordering a creatinine before administering antivirals is NOT needed for these residents who have a creatinine result from the previous year. However, ensure that creatinine can be drawn for those residents with unstable renal impairment in a timely manner (within 24 hours).

VIHA Influenza Protection Policy:

The Health Authority Influenza Protection policy was introduced in 2012, aimed at enhancing patient safety by improving influenza vaccination coverage among health care workers. All long term care facilities are expected to comply with the policy this year. There are no anticipated policy changes for this year. More information about the policy can be found on the Island Health website.

Facility Outbreak Notifications:

A regular daily email notification of health care facilities experiencing outbreaks in your region will be distributed to all long term care facilities. This notification is to enhance awareness of outbreak activity in your community, and to assist with complying with staffing algorithms during outbreaks. If your facility is not receiving outbreak email notifications, please contact the office of your local Medical Health Officer to be added to the distribution list. Facilities experiencing outbreaks are also listed on the Island Health website on the active outbreak page (<https://www.islandhealth.ca/learn-about-health/infection-prevention-control-ipac/active-outbreak>).

Resources for Facilities:

Information documents with more detailed information for long term facilities will be available on the Island Health Influenza website (www.islandhealth.ca/learn-about-health/flu-influenza/influenza-information-forms-long-term-care-facilities). The documents include:

- *Getting Ready for Influenza Season* Checklist for Long term Facilities
- *During Influenza Season* Checklist for Long term Facilities
- Use of Antivirals in Long Term Care Facilities

Order forms and vaccine reference information are also be posted on the Island Health Influenza website including:

- Long term care Facilities Influenza Vaccine order forms (region specific)
- Facility Vaccine coverage reporting forms (region specific)
- BC Centre for Disease Control Influenza Vaccine Information Sheets

Dee Hoyano, MD, FRCPC, CCFP
Medical Health Officer