

# Office of the Chief Medical Health Officer

#### **NORTH ISLAND**

250.331.8591

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

#### **CENTRAL ISLAND**

#### 250.739.6304

3<sup>RD</sup> Floor 6475 Metral Drive Nanaimo, BC V9T 2L9

#### **COWICHAN REGION**

#### 250.737.2020

Shannon Waters MD, MHSc, FRCPC 202-6425 Norcross Rd. Duncan, BC V9L 6C5

#### **SOUTH ISLAND**

250.519.3406

Reka Gustafson Chief MHO MD, MSc, FRCPC

Dee Hoyano MD, FRCPC

Mike Benusic MD, CCFP, FRCPC

Murray Fyfe MD, MSc, FRCPC

1837 Fort Street Victoria, BC V8R 1J6

#### **AFTER HOURS ON CALL**

1.800.204.6166

September 19, 2023

MEDICAL HEALTH OFFICERS'
NEWSLETTER
No. 353

## Fall influenza and COVID-19 vaccination starts soon

Dear Physicians & Nurse Practitioners -

Updated influenza and COVID-19 vaccines will soon arrive. Most people will access these through pharmacies or Island Health clinics by invites sent through the provincial Get Vaccinated system. Vaccines will also be available directly for patients and staff in long-term care and hospitals, and through Community Health Services and First Nations health providers.

You play an important role in encouraging patients (especially those at higher risk of severe disease) to get vaccinated, and administering vaccines directly to your patients if you choose.

### Participating as a community vaccine provider:

- Refer to <u>bit.ly/CVPislandhealth</u>. This page includes all instructions on ordering, storing, handling, administering and documenting. It will be updated throughout the season.
- You can order influenza vaccines as per usual, and new for this season you are also able
  to order COVID-19 vaccines. There are unique aspects of COVID-19 vaccines to
  consider, including a short shelf-life after first vial puncture and a requirement for all
  doses to be documented in the Provincial Vaccination Registry.
- The provincial fall vaccination campaign will start mid-October. You can begin ordering the week of October 2<sup>nd</sup>, with pick up starting the week of October 10<sup>th</sup>.
- We will receive shipments of vaccine throughout the season. For your first order, request
  only the quantity you anticipate needing for the first two weeks. Subsequent orders can
  be placed as needed. Vaccines will be distributed based on supply. If a specific ordered
  vaccine is no longer available, another equivalent product will be supplied. If no vaccine
  or acceptable substitute is available, you will be notified by your local health unit.
- Vaccines need to be picked-up at your local public health unit (<u>islandhealth.ca/our-locations/health-unit-locations</u>).

## Supporting patients to get vaccinated:

- If participating as a community vaccine provider, offer directly to patients as you see fit without patients having to book appointments through the provincial system.
- Otherwise, refer patients to islandhealth.ca/learn-about-health/immunizations.
- If patients haven't received COVID-19 vaccines previously in BC or didn't receive an influenza vaccine in BC last season, advise them to register in the provincial Get Vaccinated system through <a href="mailto:getvaccinated.gov.bc.ca">getvaccinated.gov.bc.ca</a> or by calling 1-833-838-2323. They will then be sent an invite to book an appointment.
- While anyone age 6 months and above will be eligible for updated COVID-19 and influenza vaccines, it is especially important for those at higher risk of severe disease including:
  - o Age 65 and above
  - Age 6 months 5 years (specifically for influenza; the following page can be used as a handout for parents)

If there are outstanding questions after reviewing <u>bit.ly/CVPislandhealth</u>, please contact your local public health unit: <u>islandhealth.ca/our-locations/health-unit-locations</u>.

Thank you for your collaboration in reducing severe disease and transmission of influenza and COVID-19.

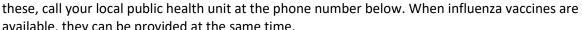


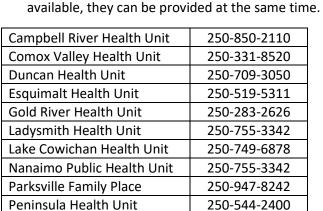
## Your Medical Health Officers recommend influenza vaccines for children

With influenza season approaching, we want to remind parents that vaccines will be available for children 6 months old and older and are a very effective way to reduce the risk of severe disease. Last year, we saw more children than usual hospitalized with influenza. Vaccination is particularly important for children younger than 5, who are at a higher risk of harm.

Invites for appointments will go out in October through the provincial Get Vaccinated system. If you child is not yet registered, register through <a href="mailto:getvaccinated.gov.bc.ca">getvaccinated.gov.bc.ca</a> or by calling 1-833-838-2323.

If your child needs to get up-to-date with routine childhood vaccines (eg. diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, polio, measles, chickenpox, hepatitis B) or if you have questions about





ca or by	rotecta	
hildhood polio, estions about	evere il	ness
e number below. When influenza vaccines are		
Port Alberni Health Uni	t	250-731-1315
Port Alice Health Unit		250-284-3555
Port Hardy Health Unit		250-902-6071
Port McNeill Health Unit		250-956-4711
Saanich Health Unit		250-519-5100
Salt Spring Island Health Unit		250-538-4880

250-725-4020

250-388-2200

250-519-3490

Tofino and Ucluelet Public Health Unit

Victoria Health Unit

West Shore Health Unit

For more information on influenza vaccines, visit <u>islandhealth.ca/learn-about-health/the-flu-influenza</u>, or call your local public health unit.

Sincerely, your Medical Health Officers:

Chief Medical Health Officer: Central Island: South Island:

Dr. Reka Gustafson Drs. Enns & Waters (covering) Dr. Mike Benusic

North Island: Cowichan Region: Dr. Murray Fyfe

Dr. Charmaine Enns Dr. Shannon Waters Dr. Dee Hoyano