

SUBJECT: 2020-21 Universal Influenza Immunization Program during COVID-19

Date: September 24, 2020

Pages: 3 with two page attachment

To: Physicians, Hospitals, Long-term Care and Prequalified Retirement Homes

From: Dr. Nicola Mercer, Medical Officer of Health and CEO

Background

Due to the potential strain on the health care system of both COVID-19 and influenza, the 2020-21 influenza season presents a crucial opportunity for all health care providers in the Wellington, Dufferin and Guelph region to work together to protect the community against influenza. The fact that the southern hemisphere has reported low influenza activity compared to previous years¹ highlights the significant impact of infection prevention and control measures for all community members.

This fall influenza vaccination should be offered to all patients over the age of six months.² Health care providers can begin immunizing patients for influenza as soon as vaccine is received.

Available influenza vaccine distributed by the Ministry:

Product	New Product Abbreviation	Dosage	Packaging	Licensed Ages for Use
Flulaval Tetra	IIV4-SD (Quadrivalent inactivated influenza vaccine-standard dose)	0.5ml	Multi-dose vial 10 doses/vial	≥ 6 months of age
Fluzone Quadrivalent	IIV4-SD (Quadrivalent inactivated influenza vaccine-standard dose)	0.5ml	10 single dose prefilled syringes or Multi dose vial	≥ 6 months of age
Flucelvax Quad (Note: primarily distributed to pharmacies)	IIV4-SD (Quadrivalent inactivated influenza vaccine-standard dose)	0.5ml	10 single dose prefilled syringes or Multi dose vial	≥ 9 years of age
Fluzone High Dose	IIV3-HD (Trivalent inactivated influenza vaccine-high dose)	0.5ml	5 single dose prefilled syringes	65+ years

Please Note:

Based on the distribution allotted to Public Health and pharmacies, product preference may not be accommodated due to supply.

Flumist (Live Attenuated Influenza Vaccine or LAIV4) will **NOT** be publicly funded in Canada for the 2020-2021 Flu season.

Notable changes to the Universal Influenza Immunization Program

A number of changes have been made to the Universal Influenza Immunization Program (UIIP) this year in order to ensure broad coverage of the influenza vaccine across the population:

- Pharmacies will be provided with Fluzone High Dose (IIV3-HD) to offer to seniors >65 years of age. As a result, WDGPH and primary care facilities will be receiving less IIV3-HD.
- A cell/recombinant based vaccine has been added to the vaccine distribution (see WDGPH Vaccine Distribution Update from September 10, 2020 for details)³
- The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI)⁴ has listed the following groups as being at high-risk of experiencing influenza-related complications or hospitalization, and for whom vaccination is particularly recommended:
 - o People over 65 or younger that 5
 - o Pregnant woman
 - o Essential community and health care workers
 - o People with the heart, brain, lung, kidney or immune disorders, diabetes, cancer, morbid obesity or anemia
 - o People who work with poultry
 - o Residents of nursing homes and other chronic care facilities
 - o Indigenous people
 - o People who could spread influenza to anyone who is high risk

Please refer to the [Ministry of Health's Immunization Services During COVID-19](#)² that was emailed to practices by WDGPH on August 27, 2020 for more information on special considerations for immunizing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ordering and Distribution

Distribution of flu vaccine is expected for the week of October 5, 2020, with long term care homes, retirement homes and hospitals prioritized, followed by primary care providers. Details on ordering and distribution details can be found in WDGPH's Vaccine Distribution Update from September 10, 2020.³

PPE Required during Influenza Vaccinations

Please refer to the [COVID-19 Guidance: Primary Care Providers in a Community Setting which is available on the Ministry of Health's Guidance for the Health Sector website](#).⁵ If a client screens negative for COVID-19:

- A surgical/procedure mask is required
- Eye protection should be considered
- Hand hygiene should be performed before and after contact with the patient or patient environment and after PPE removal.

WDGPH's Influenza Vaccination Plan

WDGPH will be providing influenza vaccination by appointment to community members that cannot access influenza through primary care providers or pharmacies. WDGPH has also offered to immunize residents and staff at local congregate living facilities (e.g. group homes, shelters, etc.) that do not have registered medical professionals. Please refer to the attached document titled *Universal Influenza Immunization Program 2020/21*⁶ for further details on WDGPH's influenza vaccination plan for the 2020-21 Influenza season.

References

1. World Health Organization. Influenza update No.375 [cited 2020 September 9]. Available from : https://www.who.int/influenza/surveillance_monitoring/updates/2020_08_31_surveillance_update_375.pdf?ua=1
2. Ontario Health. Guidance for immunization services during COVID-19 [cited 2020 September 9]. Available from: https://www.wdgpUBLICHEALTH.ca/sites/default/files/file-attachments/HCP/immunization_services_during_covid-19_08-25-2020.pdf
3. Wellington-Dufferin-Health Public Health. 2020-21 Universal Influenza Immunization Program – Vaccine distribution update. 2020 September 10. [cited 2020 September 11]. Available from: [WDGPH link here](#)
4. Public Health Agency of Canada. An advisory committee statement (ACS) national advisory committee on immunization (NACI). Canadian immunization guide chapter on influenza and statement on seasonal vaccine for 2020-2021 [cited 2020 September 9]. Available from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/vaccines-immunization/canadian-immunization-guide-statement-seasonal-influenza-vaccine-2020-2021.html>
5. Ontario Health. COVID-19 operational requirements: Health sector restart Version 2 [Internet].2020. [cited 2020 September 9]. Available from: http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/operational_requirements_health_sector.pdf
6. Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health. Universal influenza immunization program 2020/21. 2020 September. [cited 2020 September 11]. Available from: [WDGPH Link here](#)

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