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**SUBJECT:** Post-vaccination Observation Period for Influenza Vaccination  
**Date:** October 2, 2020  
**Pages:** 1  
**To:** Physicians, Primary Care Providers  
**From:** Dr. Nicola Mercer, Medical Officer of Health & CEO

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Continuing routine immunization programs during the COVID-19 pandemic is important, especially during influenza season. However, crowding at large-scale immunization clinics could contribute to transmission of COVID-19 if not properly managed. Clinics should use a hierarchy of controls to reduce risk – including maintaining physical distancing, conducting screening, and using appropriate personal protective equipment.

Reducing the 15-minute post-vaccination observation period (recommended by the Canadian Immunization Guide) can maintain physical distancing in some clinic settings.

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) now recommends that, during the COVID-19 pandemic, a shorter observation period (5 to 15 minutes) may be considered when appropriate physical distancing in post-vaccination waiting areas cannot otherwise be maintained due to the volume of individuals seeking immunization. This discretionary NACI recommendation applies only when the vaccine recipient meets all the following criteria:

- Has previously received the influenza vaccine and has had no known history of severe allergic reaction (e.g. anaphylaxis) to the vaccine or any of its components.
- No history of other immediate post-vaccination reactions (e.g. syncope).
- Will not be operating a motor vehicle, bicycle, or other wheeled transportation for a minimum of 15 minutes post-vaccination.

The vaccine recipient must be accompanied by a responsible adult who will monitor them for a minimum of 15 minutes post-vaccination. Both the recipient and chaperone must:

- Be aware of when and how to seek post-vaccination advice.
- Be given instructions on what to do if assistance and medical services are required.
- Agree to remain in the waiting area for the shorter observation period and notify staff if the recipient feels or looks at all unwell before leaving.
- Be aware a longer period of observation may be needed in clinic if they develop symptoms.

NACI recommends that the ordinary 15-minute post-vaccination observation period should be maintained for influenza vaccination settings that can maintain physical distancing. For further information see the NACI Statement on the Duration of the Post-vaccination Observation Period for Influenza Vaccination during the COVID-19 Pandemic at [Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca).

For more information, please contact:

Marlene Jantzi

Liaison Section Chief, COVID-19 Response and Program Manager, Control of Infectious Diseases

1-800-265-7293/[www.wdgppublichealth.ca](http://www.wdgppublichealth.ca)