



**Office of the  
Chief Medical  
Health Officer**

## **2017-18 Seasonal Influenza Immunization Campaign Begins in October**

Please see the Island Health (VIHA) web site at [www.viha.ca/flu](http://www.viha.ca/flu) for information about the 2017-18 Seasonal Influenza Immunization Campaign and vaccine order forms. Click on the "Community Vaccine Providers" link on the bottom of the page.

### **Immunization Campaign Dates:**

Seasonal influenza vaccine will be delivered to BC in October. 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 9 in order to allow time for vaccine to be distributed.

Public health immunization clinics are scheduled to begin the week of October 30, 2017. Please note that public health flu clinics will be focused on providing access to families with children (healthy and those with chronic conditions) and thus some flu clinic locations and times will differ from years past. Adults eligible for influenza vaccination are encouraged to seek immunization from their primary healthcare provider or pharmacist. Pharmacists are not currently certified to provide injectable vaccines to children under 5 years of age.

### **Vaccines and recommended usage:**

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

- A/Michigan/45/2015 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus (new)
- A/Hong Kong/4801/2014 (H3N2)-like virus (unchanged)
- B/Brisbane/60/2008 (Victoria-lineage)-like virus (unchanged)
- B/Phuket/3073/2013 (Yamagata-lineage)-like virus (quadrivalent vaccines only)

BC's influenza immunization program is a targeted program for those at high risk and those at risk of transmitting influenza to high risk individuals. For a full list of eligibility, please consult the Island Health flu webpage or the BCCDC immunization manual.

Five publicly funded vaccine products will be distributed on Vancouver Island for use this season.

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Vaccine Product	Recommended Patient Groups	Comments
Agriflu®	Adults 18 years + (Can be given to children 6 months +)	Supplied in single dose vials, larger packaging
Fluviral®	Adults 18 years + (Can be given to children 6 months +)	Multidose vials. Once opened, vials can be used for 28 days.
Fluzone® Quadrivalent OR Flulaval Tetra® Quadrivalent	Children age 6 months-17 years including those who have contraindications to Flumist®	Injectable vaccine
Flumist® Quadrivalent	Children age <b>2-17 years</b> with no contraindications to attenuated live vaccine	Inhaled live attenuated nasal vaccine

Fluad® will no longer be available for seniors in residential care facilities.

Other seasonal influenza vaccines have been approved by Health Canada for this season and may be available for private purchase. As it is expected that Fluzone® High Dose will be marketed to seniors for private purchase in some BC pharmacies, BCCDC has prepared an [FAQ document](#) for healthcare providers. Fluzone® High Dose will be available from some pharmacies for private purchase.

### Updates on Vaccine Usage

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) has recently revised some recommendations for influenza vaccine useage. In brief:

- It is safe for egg-allergic individuals to receive LAIV (Flumist®) as well as inactivated influenza vaccines. No special administration procedures are needed.
- For children 2-17 years of age, a quadrivalent vaccine is the recommended product (Flulaval Tetra® (QIV) OR Flumist Quadrivalent (LAIV)) due to the increased B-strain protection. However, a trivalent vaccine (Agriflu or Fluviral) may be given if other vaccine is not available.
- For children 2-17 years of age, 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.

### Antiviral Use:

Neuraminidase inhibitors (oseltamivir and zanamivir) remain the recommended drugs of choice for treatment or prophylaxis against influenza A or B for the 2017/18 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](http://www.viha.ca/flu)). The links will include information on:

- 2017/18 Eligibility for Publicly Funded Vaccine
- Vaccine Product Information from BCCDC including dosage and composition
- FluMist® Quadrivalent Information and Instructions
- 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](http://www.viha.ca/flu)) including:

- Influenza Vaccine order forms
- Influenza Vaccine reporting form (fridge count) is to be submitted by community vaccine providers by mid-January, 2018



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