



Office of the
Chief Medical
Health Officer

Facilities Influenza Prevention and Control 2017-18

Dear Director of Care:

Please see the Island Health website at <http://www.viha.ca/flu> for information about the 2017-18 Seasonal Influenza Campaign. For residential care specific information click on the "Residential Facilities" link on the left-hand side or bottom of 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 residential care facilities 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 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 30, 2017.

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)

Two publicly funded vaccine products will be distributed on Vancouver Island for use in residential 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® (Novartis) is a subunit inactivated vaccine. 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 nine 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.

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

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

There will be no publicly funded Flud® available this year but it may be available for private purchase. Fluzone® High Dose, another influenza vaccine targeted for seniors may also be available for private purchase through pharmacies.

Three other quadrivalent influenza vaccines (containing 4 strains) will be available through the public campaign- Flumist® Quadrivalent, Fluzone® Quadrivalent and Flulaval Tetra® Quadrivalent, which are funded for children only.

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). As of this year, the intranasal live attenuate vaccine (LAIV) can also be given safely to those with severe egg allergy.

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) for residents with suspected or confirmed renal impairment. Alternatively, ensure that STAT creatinine can be drawn for all vulnerable residents in a timely manner (within 24 hours) if lab services have this capacity in your community.

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 residential 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 VIHA flu website.

Facility Outbreak Notifications:

A regular email notification of health care facilities experiencing outbreaks will be distributed to all residential care facilities. This notification is to enhance awareness of outbreak activity in your community, and to assist with complying with staffing algorithms during outbreaks.

Resources for Facilities:

Information documents with more detailed information for residential facilities will be available on the VIHA Influenza website (www.viha.ca/flu). The documents include:

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

Important forms and vaccine reference information will also be posted on the VIHA Influenza website (www.viha.ca/flu) including:

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



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