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**MEDICAL HEALTH OFFICERS'  
NEWSLETTER  
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**2020 - 2021 Seasonal Influenza Immunization Campaign begins in October**

Influenza vaccination is of particular importance this season because of the COVID-19 pandemic, to reduce the risk of respiratory illness overall, prevent outbreaks within long term care facilities and other vulnerable populations, and reduce unnecessary isolation and testing for COVID-19. **Please stress the importance of influenza vaccination with your high risk patients and healthcare colleagues, as well as those who are in direct, regular contact with medically high risk individuals.**

Influenza vaccine will be available through community vaccine providers such as pharmacists, physicians, and expanded public health community clinics. Collaboration with all providers this season will be needed to meet demand for vaccine and to be able to deliver it safely. We encourage family physicians to work with their local Division to continue to offer immunization to their high risk patients, and coordinate collaboration with local Public Health units.

Public Health flu clinics will begin the week of Oct. 19, 2020 and access will be open this year to adults as well as families with children. Although access will be expanded at Public Health clinics, we encourage all community vaccine providers to continue to provide as much influenza vaccination as they have capacity to do, in order to meet public need.

Please see the Island Health web site at: [www.islandhealth.ca/flu](http://www.islandhealth.ca/flu) and click on the "Community Vaccine Provider" button for information about the 2020-2021 Seasonal Influenza Immunization Campaign and vaccine order forms.

**Immunization Orders and Inventory Tracking:**

Seasonal influenza vaccine will be delivered to BC in late September/early October. Please place your order for vaccine as soon as possible through your local health unit and plan to begin vaccinating after **October 11** in order to allow time for vaccine to be distributed.

**Please place initial orders for the vaccine you intend to use for the *first 2 weeks only*** and then place additional orders after that time. If you have organized a large-scale vaccination clinic, also please indicate this on your order form. We ask this to ensure that all community vaccine providers have access to vaccine early in the season in an equitable fashion.

Island Health will be tracking vaccine inventory in the community more closely this season in order to distribute orders equitably to providers, as well as inform the public where they can access vaccine in their local community. **We will be asking community providers to provide weekly updates of their vaccine supply via an online form, and this form MUST be updated before subsequent orders will be distributed.** More details on this process will be shared when it is available.

**Vaccines and recommended usage:**

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

- A/Guangdong-Maonan/SWL1536/2019 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus (new);
- A/Hong Kong/2671/2019 (H3N2)-like virus (new);
- B/Washington/02/2019-like virus (new); and
- B/Phuket/3073/2013-like virus (in quadrivalent vaccines only)

**Eligibility:** There is no change in eligibility criteria this season. High risk patients with chronic health

conditions should be encouraged to be immunized, as they are often underimmunized. There is no need to be overly restrictive in providing immunization, as most people are eligible.

Six publicly funded vaccine products will be distributed on Vancouver Island for use this season:

Vaccine Product	Recommended Patient Groups	Comments
Fluad Trivalent	Adults 65 years + only	Adjuvanted vaccine to enhance immune response in seniors; Pre-filled syringe
Agriflu® Trivalent	Adults 18 years + including seniors (Can be given to children 6 months +)	Prefilled syringe
Fluviral® Trivalent	Adults 18 years + including seniors (Can be given to children 6 months +)	Multidose vials. Once opened, vials can be used for 28 days.
FluLaval® Tetra Quadrivalent	Children age 6 months– 17 years	Multidose vials. Once opened, vials can be used for 28 days. May be substituted with alternative quadrivalent product, depending on supply.
Flumist® Quadrivalent Intranasal	Children 2 years- 17 years	Intranasal live vaccine; additional contraindications
Fluzone HD	Adults 65 years+ only, residents of long term care and assisted living facilities only (inventory permitting)	Not available for community vaccine providers; supply will be sent to facilities directly

Small amounts of Fluzone® High Dose may be available for private purchase through pharmacies.

Severe egg allergy is NOT a contraindication to any influenza vaccine.

**Guidance on Influenza Vaccine Administration during COVID-19:**

Please review the BCCDC guidelines on influenza vaccine administration in the BCCDC Immunization Manual (online): [http://www.bccdc.ca/resource-gallery/Documents/Guidelines%20and%20Forms/Guidelines%20and%20Manuals/Epid/CD%20Manual/Chapter%20-%20-%20Imms/Guidance\\_for\\_Influenza\\_Vaccine\\_Delivery\\_During\\_COVID-19.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/resource-gallery/Documents/Guidelines%20and%20Forms/Guidelines%20and%20Manuals/Epid/CD%20Manual/Chapter%20-%20-%20Imms/Guidance_for_Influenza_Vaccine_Delivery_During_COVID-19.pdf)

In addition to standard COVID-19 precautions for indoor clinic visits, this guidance includes recommendations about outdoor settings for immunization delivery such as using parking lots/drive in for immunization.

**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. The links will include information on:

- 2020-2021 Eligibility for Publicly Funded Vaccine
- Vaccine Product Information from BCCDC including dosage, composition and contraindications
- Antiviral Guidelines for general use and in Long Term Care facilities

**Important forms and links will also be posted on the Island Health Influenza website including:**

- Influenza Vaccine order forms
- Vaccine inventory reporting form link
- Island Health Flu Locator website for Public Health Influenza Community Clinics and appointment booking, and
- Community Vaccine Provider locations (public access clinics only)
- Influenza reporting forms for children