

**VCH Influenza Campaign 2019-2020  
For Public Health Immunizers:  
Frequently Asked Questions from the Public**

**1. What is in the influenza vaccine this year?**

2019-2020 seasonal trivalent and quadrivalent vaccines help protect against the following strains:

- **New** - A/Brisbane/02/2018 (H1N1)pdm09 - like virus
- **New** - A/Kansas/14/2017 (H3N2) - like virus
- B/Colorado/2017 - like virus (Victoria lineage)
- B/Phuket/2013-like virus (Yamagata lineage) Quadrivalent vaccines only

**2. When will the flu shot be available?**

Influenza vaccines have started to be distributed to physicians and pharmacists. Long-term care facilities and Workplace Health have already received vaccine. Public health mass clinics will begin end-October to early November 2019.

**3. Where can I get a flu vaccine?**

- At a VCH Public Health clinic\*
- With your family physician
- At a walk-in clinic
- At a pharmacist\*\*
- At a travel clinic

\*For VCH Public Health clinics, go to <http://www.vch.ca/public-health/communicable-diseases-immunizations/flu-shots-flu-clinics>. Please see details on each clinic as some are on a drop-in basis and others are by appointment.

\*\*For clinics at pharmacies, go to <http://www.immunizebc.ca/clinics/flu#8/49.246/-123.116>.

**4. I have already received a trivalent influenza vaccine this season. Should I get a dose of the quadrivalent influenza vaccine as well?**

No. Receiving more than one dose of influenza vaccine in the same season is not recommended, except for those children 6 months to 8 years receiving their influenza vaccine for the first time.

**5. If I get the flu vaccine every year, will it continue to protect me?**

Yes. Many studies have shown that people who receive the flu shot are better protected against seasonal influenza than those who are not vaccinated. There are a few studies that have detected reduced amount of protection among those who are immunized annually against influenza. The

reasons for this effect are not understood. However, the same studies show that vaccinated people are always better off than unvaccinated people regardless of prior history of immunization. The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) has reviewed these studies and continues to recommend that people get their annual influenza vaccine.

#### **6. Is FluMist® available this season?**

No. **FluMist®** is not available in Canada for the 2019-2020 influenza season. A statement was released by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) that there will not be a live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV) available in Canada for this season. The reason reported by Drug Shortages Canada: shortage of an active ingredient.

#### **7. Why is Fluzone HD® (High Dose) not publicly funded for seniors?**

In order to simplify number of vaccine products offered, Fluzone HD® was not purchased by the province and is not be a publicly funded vaccine this season. Fluzone HD® is a private pay option for seniors that is recommended by NACI, and is expected to provide superior protection compared to standard-dose TIV. Vancouver Coastal Health Medical Health Officers recommend Fluzone HD® and it can be purchased at the VCH travel clinic and at select pharmacies, please call in advance to ensure stock is available. Fluviral® or Agriflu® are the publicly funded trivalent influenza vaccines that are offered free to seniors.

#### **8. What is the difference between Fluzone® Quadrivalent and Fluzone® High-Dose (HD) vaccines?**

Fluzone® Quadrivalent is a publicly funded flu vaccine indicated for children 6 months to 17 years of age to protect against four strains of the flu; two A strains and two B strains.

Fluzone® HD is a trivalent inactivated influenza vaccine that contains four times the amount of antigen compared to regular flu vaccines. The additional antigen amount is intended to create a stronger immune response in the person getting the vaccine. In Canada, this vaccine is approved for adults 65 years of age and older and can be purchased from a pharmacy.

For more information on Fluzone® HD, please see the BCCDC Q&A (updated August 2019):

[http://www.bccdc.ca/resource-gallery/Documents/Guidelines%20and%20Forms/Guidelines%20and%20Manuals/Immunization/Vaccine%20Info/FluzoneHD\\_QandA.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/resource-gallery/Documents/Guidelines%20and%20Forms/Guidelines%20and%20Manuals/Immunization/Vaccine%20Info/FluzoneHD_QandA.pdf)

#### **10. Can seniors get the ‘double’ dose of Fluzone® Quadrivalent as Fluzone® HD is not publicly funded?**

No. Double dosing influenza vaccine for seniors is not recommended. There are a number of differences between the two vaccine products and the pediatric vaccine Fluzone® Quadrivalent is intended for children 6 months to 17 years of age.

**11. Can a client receive Fluzone® HD after they received TIV?**

No. Only one dose of influenza vaccine is recommended for adults. Thus, if client has already received TIV, Fluzone® HD is not needed in the same season.

**12. At a mass flu clinic, if a client asks whether they should get free TIV or defer until they can purchase Fluzone® HD, what would be the recommendation?**

Regardless of the vaccine product chosen, seniors are recommended to get the flu shot. Only one dose is needed. All products are recommended. Thus the client needs to make a decision: free vaccine now, or a vaccine that performs 25% better, requires payment, and for which they need to make an appointment at a VCH Travel Clinic/pharmacy later.

If they cannot make up their mind, given that they made the appointment with public health and took the time to come, we recommend they be immunized using TIV so an immunization opportunity is not lost. They can then take the time to consider additional information and have a plan in place for subsequent seasons.

**13. Is there a non-egg based, non-animal matter influenza vaccine option for Vegan individuals?**

Yes: Flublok® is the only recombinant influenza vaccine on the market that does not use eggs in any part of the manufacturing process. It is licensed by the FDA for use in Adults 18 years of age and older. It is only available in the US and can be purchased at select pharmacies. Individuals wanting this vaccine would have to travel to the US to purchase this vaccine on their own.

*Note: This product is considered an acceptable alternative for the VCH Influenza Prevention Policy.*

For Flublok® locator (in the USA only) see the following map for health care sites and pharmacies offering this vaccine: <http://www.fluzone.com/locator-map.cfm>