

VCH Respiratory Season Campaign 2023-2024 For Public Health and Mass clinic Immunizers: Frequently Asked Questions from the Public

Influenza and COVID-19

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Influenza

1. What is in the influenza vaccine this year?
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11. At a mass flu clinic, if a preferred product by age is not available, what would be the recommendation?
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COVID- 19

1. What are the COVID- 19 vaccines available for this season?
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Flu/ COVID-19

1. When will the flu and COVID vaccines be available?

First distribution once vaccine arrives: Long Term Care Facilities and Assisted Living Facilities

An official, provincial start date for the fall 2023 COVID-19 and Influenza vaccination campaigns is required for operational and service delivery planning to ensure a sufficient amount of vaccines is pre-positioned in clinics and pharmacies across BC, and to support coordinated and consistent messaging within the health care system and to the public. The fall 2023 vaccine campaign is expected to start on October 10, 2023.

2. How do I book an appointment to get immunized for Influenza/ COVID-19?

Residents of BC will be invited to book an appointment once vaccine is available.

Clients will need to [Register to get vaccinated](#) unless they have already done so in a previous year. Then visit this site to [Book a flu or covid-19 appointment](#).

3. Where are the locations of the public health clinics?

See this link which includes both Mass and PopUp clinics:

<https://www.vch.ca/en/influenza-and-covid-19-immunization-clinics>

Mass clinic sites

- **Vancouver** - International Village Mall, 88 W. Pender St.
- **North Shore** – former ICBC Claims Centre, 255 Lloyd Ave, North Vancouver
- **Richmond** – 8100 Granville
- **Squamish** – Sea to Sky Hotel
- **Whistler** – Whistler Health Care Centre
- **Pemberton** – Pemberton Community Centre
- **Sechelt** – Sechelt Legion, Seaside Centre, and Trail Bay Mall
- **Gibsons** – Gibsons Legion
- **Madeira Park** – Madeira Park Legion
- **Powell River** – Powell River Recreation Complex

4. I am having trouble booking on ImmsBC, what is the number to call for troubleshooting and support?

The phone number is 1-833-838-2323 (toll free)

Telephone for the Deaf: Dial 711

Service is available Monday- Friday: 7am to 7pm or 9am to 5pm on statutory holidays

Translated services for 140 languages

5. Where else can I get a flu and COVID-19 vaccine?

Flu and COVID-19

- At a VCH respiratory season mass clinic*
- At a pharmacist*
- At a travel clinic including VCH Travel Clinic

Flu

- With your family physician (some family physicians can provide COVID-19 vaccines- please ask family to consult with their family physician)
- At a walk-in clinic

*For clinics at pharmacies and public health, go to <https://immunizebc.ca/clinics/flu#8/49.246/-123.116>

6. What vaccines are available at VCH respiratory season mass clinic?

Flu and COVID vaccines are available at VCH Mass Clinics. Pneumococcal vaccines will not be available.

7. Where can individuals get the pneumococcal vaccines?

- With your family physician
- At a pharmacist
- At a travel clinic including VCH Travel Clinic

8. Can I receive flu vaccine at the same visit as my COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes. VCH recommends COVID-19 vaccine can be administered at the same time as flu vaccine.

9. Do I need the flu and COVID vaccines every season?

Regular vaccination is recommended because both influenza and COVID-19 viruses change (mutate) from season to season, so the vaccine changes to protect you against the viruses circulating at this time. Protection from these vaccines does wear off with time, so you need to update your protection.

COVID-19: These newly formulated vaccines will target the XBB.1.5 variant which is of Omicron lineage. Individuals vaccinated with the updated XBB.1.5 containing COVID 19 vaccine are expected to benefit from a better immune response against currently circulating strains, compared to earlier formulations. The newly formulated vaccine is also expected to provide protection against emerging and related strains such as the EG.5 (Eris) variant.

10. Can my children receive the flu and COVID-19 vaccine at Child Health Clinic (CHC) appointments?

Yes. Children will be offered flu and COVID 19 vaccines at CHCs, along with routine immunizations starting at 6 months of age.

11. Can I get flu and COVID-19 vaccines if I am pregnant?

Influenza and COVID-19 infection during pregnancy places both women and babies at greater risk of severe outcomes, including hospitalization and death. Vaccination is recommended at all stages of pregnancy. Vaccination during pregnancy is safe. There is no increased risk of miscarriage, congenital anomalies, preterm delivery or other adverse perinatal outcomes.

Influenza

1. What is in the influenza vaccine this year?

- **A/Victoria/4897/2022 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus - NEW**
- A/Darwin/9/2021 (H3N2)-like virus
- B/Austria/1359417/2021-like virus
- B/Phuket/3073/2013-like virus (in quadrivalent vaccines only)

The A/Victoria strain was not contained in the 2022/23 season vaccines

2. What products are available for the 2023-2024 influenza season?

Most products for 2023/2024 will be Quadrivalent formulation with the exception of Flud[®] which is a trivalent vaccine.

Products:

- Fluzone[®] **QIIV** (Multi dose and Pre-filled syringes)
- Flulaval Tetra[®] **QIIV MDV**
- Flumist[®] **QIIV** (LAIV nasal spray)
- Fluzone[®] **QIIV High-Dose (HD)**: only for 65+ residents of long term care facilities, assisted living facilities, and 65+ First Nations communities
- Flud[®] **TIIV** (Assisted living, community dwelling seniors 65+)

3. Can FluMist[®] be given at the same time as other live vaccines?

Yes. FluMist[®] can be given concomitantly with, or any time before or after any other live vaccine.

4. Will FluMist[®] be available at clinics for children?

Yes, FluMist[®] will be available in the Mass and PopUp clinics while supplies last.

5. Should I be concerned about the effectiveness of FluMist[®]?

No. The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) concluded that the current evidence is consistent with Live-Attenuated Influenza Vaccine (LAIV) providing comparable protection against influenza to that shown by the injectable Influenza vaccine. This conclusion comes after careful review of the available Canadian and international LAIV vaccine efficacy data over many influenza seasons.

For more information please see the [national-advisory-committee-immunization-statement-seasonal-influenza-vaccine-2023-2024.html](https://www.nacim.ca/national-advisory-committee-immunization-statement-seasonal-influenza-vaccine-2023-2024.html)

6. If my child is currently on an antiviral against influenza (eg. Oseltamivir), can FluMist[®] also be given at the same time?

No. Since antivirals against influenza interfere with the immune response to FluMist[®], FluMist[®] should not be given to individuals while on these antivirals. Such individuals should receive the inactivated influenza vaccine.

7. Is Fluzone® HD (High Dose) publicly funded for seniors for the 2023-2024 season?

Yes. Fluzone® HD was purchased by the province and will be publicly funded for those 65 years and older living in long-term care facilities and seniors 65 years and older in First Nations communities. Fluzone® HD is recommended by NACI, and is expected to provide superior protection compared to standard-dose. For those seniors in assisted living facilities and community dwelling seniors who do not qualify for publicly-funded Fluzone® HD, they should be offered Flud® or FluZone® Quad.

Alternatively, Fluzone® HD may be available for purchase at your local pharmacy or travel clinic, including VCH Travel Clinic. Call ahead to see if available.

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

Fluzone® Quadrivalent is a flu vaccine indicated for the general public aged 6 months and over to protect against four strains of the flu; two A strains and two B strains.

Fluzone® HD is an 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.

For more information on Fluzone® HD, please see the BCCDC Q&A (updated August 2023): [Influenza-vaccines-adults-65-older-QandA.pdf](#)

9. Can seniors get a 'double' dose of Fluzone® Quadrivalent?

No. Double dosing influenza vaccine for seniors is not recommended.

10. Can a client receive Fluzone® HD after they received QIIV?

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

11. At a mass flu clinic, if a preferred product by age is not available, what would be the recommendation?

Regardless of the vaccine product chosen, any individual six months of age and older is recommended to get the flu shot. If a client has made an appointment and attends the clinic, we recommend they be immunized using the flu products available and not deferred for a different product 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.

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

Vegan vaccines (non-egg based, non-animal matter) against influenza are not available in Canada.

13. Is RSV vaccine available for seniors this fall?

Arexvy®, an RSV vaccine, has been authorized by Health Canada for the prevention of lower respiratory tract disease caused by RSV in adults 60 years of age and older. The National Advisory Committee (NACI) is reviewing the use of Arexvy®.

Approval of Arexvy® was based on a comprehensive Phase III clinical trial program that showed high vaccine efficacy of 82.6% for prevention of lower respiratory tract disease caused by RSV in older adults, and 94.6% efficacy in those with underlying medical conditions.

Arexvy® is currently available for purchase at VCH travel clinic for \$270. This vaccine may be available at other travel clinics and pharmacies. Call ahead to inquire.

14. Can someone with cancer or on immunosuppressive medications receive an Influenza vaccine?

In most cases, yes. Please consult this resource: [BC Cancer Influenza vaccine recommendations for adults with cancer](#) for specific information.

COVID- 19

1. What are the COVID- 19 vaccines available for this season?

Moderna® XBB.1.5- approved by Health Canada and the product is currently available in BC.

Pfizer® XBB.1.5- approved by Health Canada, and only 12+ Pfizer product is available at this time.

Novovax® XBB.1.5- awaiting Health Canada approval.

2. When should I get my next COVID-19 vaccine because I recently had a COVID-19 infection?

For best response to the vaccine, COVID-19 vaccine is recommended to be deferred in those who have tested positive for COVID-19 (by PCR or rapid antigen test) until 3-6 months from symptom onset or, for asymptomatic cases, from the time of the positive test.

Should a client request, COVID-19 vaccine maybe offered to individuals at anytime following their recovery from SAR-CoV-2 infection. MHO approval is not required.

3. When will Novovax® XBB.1.5 be available?

Novovax® XBB.1.5 is still awaiting Health Canada approval.

4. Where can I get a COVID-19 test kit?

Rapid antigen testing kits are available free for everyone. Visit your local pharmacy and ask for a testing kit. <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/testing/when-to-get-a-covid-19-test>

5. Where can I get more COVID-19 information- Public?

You can check out Immunize BC website- <https://immunizebc.ca/vaccines-by-disease/covid-19>

6. Where can I get more COVID-19 information- HealthCare Provider?

You can check out BCCDC Healthcare Provider Q&A <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/covid-19-care/covid-19-vaccinations/healthcare-provider-q-a>