

Influenza Information Sheet

2023 BC Public Service Worksite Influenza Clinic Program

As in past years, the influenza vaccine is once again available, free of charge, to any individual engaged in the operational activities of the BC Public Service during influenza season. This makes getting vaccinated convenient for employees by offering clinics at or near BC Public Service worksites during the workday.

About influenza

Influenza (often called 'the flu') is an infection that affects the respiratory system which spreads from person to person by tiny droplets carried in a cough or a sneeze. You can also be infected by touching your own eyes, nose, or mouth after touching contaminated surfaces which may include an infected person's hands.

Common symptoms include:

- Fever
- Body aches
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Runny nose
- Loss of appetite
- A cough or sore throat

Fever and other symptoms can usually last up to seven to ten days, with the cough and weakness lasting one to two more weeks. The duration of the influenza season varies from year to year, can start early, and can run as late as May. Early immunization is recommended to ensure that the vaccine's protective antibodies are in place before influenza activity begins.

Worksite influenza (flu) clinics

Worksite clinics are only possible due to the efforts and dedication of employees who volunteer to be a worksite contact. The worksite influenza clinic program will run from the end of October through to early December. Your worksite contact will provide you with information about the clinic options available to you, as well as the link to book your immunization appointment.

Influenza vaccine: INFLUVAC® TETRA

The vaccine components often change from year to year, based on worldwide tracking for changes in the virus and predictions about which strains will circulate each season. The vaccine that will be administered at worksite clinics is an inactivated (i.e. killed virus) vaccine that will provide protection against the following four main groups of influenza viruses:

1. an A/Victoria/4897/2022 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus;
2. an A/Darwin/9/2021 (H3N2)-like virus;
3. a B/Austria/1359417/2021 (B/Victoria lineage)-like virus; and

4. a B/Phuket/3073/2013 (B/Yamagata lineage)-like virus.

The effectiveness of the influenza vaccine is known to lessen over time and may not span two influenza seasons. For best protection, get immunized as soon as possible.

Who should get the influenza vaccine?

Canada's National Advisory Committee on Immunization continues to recommend that everyone six months old and older should get the influenza vaccine. Immunization is especially important for people who are at higher risk of developing complications from influenza infection, including:

- Young children (not eligible for immunization at worksite clinics)
- Pregnant women
- The elderly
- People with certain medical conditions
- Those able to transmit or spread influenza to those at high risk

For more information on populations at highest risk, see [HealthLinkBC](#).

Who should not receive the influenza vaccine?

Speak with your health care provider if you:

- Had a life-threatening allergic reaction to a previous dose of influenza vaccine, or any part of the vaccine (people with egg allergies can be safely immunized with the inactivated influenza vaccine)

- Developed Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) within 6 weeks of getting any influenza vaccine without another cause being identified.

In general, it's safe for you to get immunized even if you are recovering from an illness. However, stay home if you are recovering from an illness that can spread from person to person so you're not putting others at risk of infection when you come for your appointment.

Benefits and risks

Influenza vaccines are a safe and effective way to help prevent illness and protect yourself and others. Following immunization, your body's immune system develops protection (antibodies) against the strains of the virus. The antibodies help prevent infection, reduce the severity of illness if you are infected, and reduce spread of the virus. Common reactions to the influenza vaccine may include:

- Localized swelling at where the vaccine was given
- Fever and chills
- Headache
- Muscle or joint soreness approximately six to twelve hours after vaccination
- Anaphylaxis is a rare and extreme allergic reaction which can occur if a person is allergic to any of the components of the vaccine

You cannot get influenza from the inactivated vaccine as it contains killed influenza viruses, or parts of the virus that cannot cause infection.

Consent form

Complete a consent form (available on [Careers & MyHR](#)) and bring it to your immunization appointment. A nurse will review your form and discuss any concerns you may have.

Additional information and resources

- For more information about cold and influenza supports for BC Public Service employees, visit [Careers & MyHR](#).
- For more information about influenza, visit [HealthLinkBC](#).
- For general questions about clinic schedules or forms, please ask your worksite contact or email the BC Public Service [cold and flu team](#).
- For confidential inquiries related to individual health issues, please contact the clinic nurse team during regular business hours at FLUOHN@healthserv.com or call 1-866-663-5848, extension 232.
- All B.C. residents 6 months and older can get a free influenza vaccine this fall and winter. For more information about booking an appointment in your community, for yourself and/or your family members, visit [ImmunizeBC](#).