

Influenza information sheet

2024 BC Public Service Worksite Influenza Clinic Program

As in past years, the influenza vaccine is 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 affecting 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 7 to 10 days, with the cough and weakness lasting one to 2 additional weeks. The duration of the influenza season varies year to year, can start early and run as late as May. Early immunization is recommended to ensure the vaccine's protective antibodies are in place before influenza activity begins.

BC Public Service worksite influenza 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 runs from the end of October to early December. Your worksite contact will provide information about the clinic options available to you and how to book an 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 administered at worksite clinics is an inactivated (killed virus) vaccine that provides protection against the following four main groups of influenza viruses:

1. A/Victoria/4897/2022 (H1N1) pdm09-like virus (A/Victoria/4897/2022, IVR-238);
2. A/Thailand/8/2022 (H3N2)-like strain (A/California/122/2022, SAN-022);
3. B/Austria/1359417/2021-like strain (B/Austria/1359417/2021, BVR-26); and

4. B/Phuket/3073/2013-like strain (B/Phuket/3073/2013, wild type).

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 6 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)
- People who are pregnant
- 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 healthcare 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 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 concerns, 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 (among other available vaccinations) this fall and winter through their local health authority. For more information about booking an appointment in your community, for yourself and/or your family members, visit [ImmunizeBC](#)