



November 4, 2009

Office of Provincial Health Officer Statement

### **Co-administration of Pandemic H1N1 (pH1N1) Vaccine and Seasonal Influenza Vaccine**

The recent advice for co-administration of pH1N1 vaccine and seasonal influenza vaccine has raised a question about the possibility of increased risk of pH1N1 disease in the time period after vaccine co-administration, during which immunity to pH1N1 is developing (approximately 14 days).

This question stems from the association between prior administration of seasonal influenza vaccine and increased risk of pH1N1 disease noted in Canadian studies.

There are no scientific studies specifically to assess concurrent administration of unadjuvanted seasonal vaccine and adjuvanted pH1N1 vaccine. The Canadian research studies did not specifically assess the issue of concurrent administration of seasonal and pandemic vaccines.

Earlier recommendations from the Office of the Provincial Health Officer for deferral of seasonal influenza vaccine until after receipt of pH1N1 vaccine were made based on a number of considerations including a theoretical concern of immunological interference between these two vaccines, as well as the research mentioned above. A recent study of concurrent administration of unadjuvanted seasonal and unadjuvanted pH1N1 vaccines indicate immunological interference with concurrent administration is not shown and the immune system responds well to both seasonal and pH1N1 vaccines when given at the same time.

The question of safety of co-administration of pH1N1 vaccine and seasonal influenza vaccine has been carefully considered by national immunization advisory groups in Canada (National Advisory Committee on Immunization and the Pandemic Vaccine Working Group), the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices in the US, the World Health Organization, as well as public health experts in British Columbia.

The conclusion of these expert groups is that pH1N1 vaccine and seasonal influenza immunization may be administered concurrently.

There is real risk of lowered uptake of seasonal influenza vaccine if the opportunity to co-administer both vaccines is not taken. If seasonal influenza subsequently appears in BC, lowered uptake of seasonal influenza vaccine would result in increased risk of seasonal influenza disease and complications for those who did not receive seasonal influenza vaccine and/or those with whom they come into contact.

If given sequentially there is no specified time period between when the shots may be given. For people under 65 pH1N1 vaccine should be offered first if co-administration is not chosen or not an option. People over 65 may receive the vaccines concurrently or in any order. Additional details on vaccine administration are available on the [ImmunizeBC website](#).

In conclusion pH1N1 influenza vaccine and seasonal influenza vaccine may be offered by way of co-administration for those eligible for both vaccines. Initially pH1N1 vaccine will only be offered to those groups identified as priority recipients during the period of limited supply, until further notice. In addition, other local logistical considerations will determine whether people are offered both vaccines concurrently or sequentially.



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