

Ministry of Health

Health Care Provider Qs & As: Information for Individuals ≥ 65 years of age

This Qs & As sheet is intended for informational purposes only. It is not intended to provide medical or legal advice.

1. What publicly funded influenza vaccines are available for individuals ≥ 65 years of age for Ontario's Universal Influenza Immunization Program (UIIP) during the 2019/2020 influenza season?

	Quadrivalent Inactivated Vaccine			High-Dose Trivalent Inactivated Vaccine				
UIIP Abbreviation	QIV			High-dose TIV				
NACI Abbreviation	IIV4-SD			IIV3-HD				
Vaccine product	FluLaval Tetra	Fluzone® Quadrivalent	Afluria® Tetra	Fluzone® High-Dose				
Micrograms of HA	15 µg	15 µg	15 µg	60 µg				
Dosage	0.5 ml	0.5 ml	0.5 ml	0.5 ml				
Format	Multidose vial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multidose vial (MDV) • Prefilled syringe (PFS) 	Prefilled syringe	Prefilled syringe				
Route	Intramuscular injection	Intramuscular injection	Intramuscular injection	Intramuscular Injection				
Age indication	≥ 6 months	≥ 6 months	≥ 5 years	≥ 65 years				
Most common allergens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egg protein* • Thimerosal 	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>MDV</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egg protein* • Thimerosal </td> </tr> <tr> <td>PFS</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egg protein* </td> </tr> </table>	MDV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egg protein* • Thimerosal 	PFS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egg protein* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egg protein* • Neomycin • Polymyxin B 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egg protein*
MDV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egg protein* • Thimerosal 							
PFS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egg protein* 							

*The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) indicates that egg-allergic individuals may be vaccinated against influenza using the full dose of any appropriate product.

HA refers to hemagglutinin

Important note:

- Fluzone® Quadrivalent and Fluzone® High-Dose are different products. Please use caution when administering Fluzone® products to ensure that the right vaccine is being administered to the right person.
- Fluzone® High-Dose will be available through primary care providers (e.g. physicians and nurse practitioners), participating retirement homes, long-term care homes and hospitals. Fluzone® High-Dose will not be available through pharmacies.

2. What is the high-dose TIV and how is it different than the QIV?

The high-dose TIV contains three influenza strains. The vaccine contains a higher amount of antigen per strain than standard-dose influenza vaccine formulations. The high-dose TIV contains 60 µg of hemagglutinin (HA) protein for each of the three vaccine strains compared to 15 µg of HA per strain in a standard dose vaccine, such as QIV. Studies have shown that the higher antigen content improves the immune response and improves how well the vaccine works compared to standard dose TIV, which is important since older individuals may not respond as well to influenza vaccines compared to younger individuals.

Both the high-dose TIV and the QIV formulations available in the UIIP for 2019/2020 are inactivated influenza vaccines. The high-dose TIV contains only one strain of influenza B compared to the two influenza B strains contained in the QIV formulations.

To date no studies have directly compared high-dose TIV and QIV formulations.

3. Which influenza vaccine should individuals ≥65 years of age receive?

Studies have shown that the high-dose TIV provides better protection against the influenza A(H3N2) strain in individuals who are ≥65 years of age compared to the standard-dose TIV formulations. A(H3N2) is associated with greater disease burden in individuals 65 years of age and older.

QIV offers protection against the same strains contained in the high-dose TIV formulation with additional protection against a second influenza B strain. Relative to A(H3N2), influenza B occurs much less commonly in individuals 65 years of age and older.

Currently, there is insufficient evidence to directly compare the high-dose TIV and QIV products.

Given the options available for vaccination for those ≥65 years of age, it is important to discuss the specifics of each available vaccine to assist the individual in their decision making. Do not, however, delay vaccination in order to wait for a particular product. Both QIV and high-dose TIV protect against the flu, and the most important thing is for seniors to be vaccinated.

For more information on high-dose TIV and QIV formulations, please refer to the following:

- *Canadian Immunization Guide Chapter on Influenza and Statement on Seasonal Influenza Vaccine for 2019-2020* available at: www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/vaccines-immunization/canadian-immunization-guide-statement-seasonal-influenza-vaccine-2019-2020.html#V2 and;
- Public Health Ontario's *Influenza Vaccines for the 2019-20 Influenza Season – Focus on Adults 65 Years of Age and Over* available at: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/diseases-and-conditions/infectious-diseases/respiratory-diseases/influenza> .

4. How many doses of the influenza vaccine are needed to provide protection?

One dose of the influenza vaccine is needed to provide protection each year (influenza season).

5. Can the vaccine cause influenza?

No, both QIV and high-dose TIV are inactivated vaccines so individuals cannot get influenza from the vaccine.

6. Can the vaccine be given to individuals when they are ill?

Those with a severe acute illness with or without fever should usually wait until the symptoms subside before being immunized.

Individuals with a minor illness with or without fever (e.g. a cold) can still get the vaccine.

7. What are the common side effects from the vaccine?

- Redness, swelling, and soreness at the injection site
- Headache
- Tiredness/weakness
- Fever

These are generally mild and last only a few days.

8. Who should NOT get the influenza vaccine?

- Anyone who has had a serious allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to a previous dose or to any ingredient in the vaccine, except for egg.
 - According to NACI, egg-allergic individuals may be vaccinated against influenza using the full dose of any appropriate product, including QIV and high-dose TIV.
- Anyone who has developed Guillan-Barré Syndrome (GBS) within six weeks of a previous influenza vaccination should generally not be vaccinated, however, this should be weighed against the risks of not being protected against influenza.

9. What information should be provided to individuals related to potential adverse events following immunization (AEFI) with the influenza vaccine?

The influenza vaccine, like any medicine, can cause side effects, which in most cases are mild, lasting only a few days. Life-threatening allergic (anaphylactic) reactions are very rare. If they do occur, it is typically within a few minutes to a few hours after receiving the vaccine. Guillian-Barré Syndrome (GBS) or Oculorespiratory Syndrome (ORS) may occur in extremely rare instances. Please refer to question 17 of the *Health Care Provider Q & A: Information for the 2019/2020 Influenza Season* sheet for further details.

As per the s.38 of the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, those administering vaccines should ensure that the vaccine recipients are advised to immediately call their doctor/nurse practitioner or go to the nearest hospital emergency department if they develop a reaction that could be related to the vaccine, particularly the following:

- Hives
- Swelling of the mouth and throat
- Trouble breathing, hoarseness or wheezing
- High fever (over 40°C or 104°F)
- Convulsions (seizures)
- Other serious reactions

Health care providers (e.g., physicians, nurses and pharmacists) are required by law (i.e., Health Protection and Promotion Act, s. 38) to report AEFIs. Reports should be made using the Ontario AEFI Reporting Form (available at: <http://www.publichealthontario.ca/vaccinesafety>) and sent to the local public health unit

A list of public health units is available at:

<http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/phu/locations.aspx>.

10. Where can health care providers find more information about the UIIP?

Health care providers looking for more information about influenza, influenza vaccine, or the province's UIIP can refer to the Health Care Provider Qs & As: Information for the 2019/2020 Influenza Season sheet or to their local public health unit.

A list of public health units is available at:

<http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/phu/locations.aspx>.

11. Who should individuals talk to if they have questions about influenza or any other vaccines?

Individuals looking for general information about influenza, the influenza vaccine or the province's UIIP can call ServiceOntario, INFOline at 1-866-532-3161 toll free in Ontario (TTY#1-800-387-5559) or visit: ontario.ca/flu. Questions about the vaccine that are specific to an individual's medical condition should be discussed with a health care provider or local public health unit.

A list of public health units is available at:

<http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/phu/locations.aspx>

For additional information on influenza or the vaccine, please visit the following websites or call your local public health unit:

- a) Universal Influenza Immunization Program: <http://www.ontario.ca/influenza>
- b) Public Health Agency of Canada - National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) Statement on Seasonal Influenza Vaccine: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/vaccines-immunization/canadian-immunization-guide-statement-seasonal-influenza-vaccine-2019-2020.html>
- c) Public Health Ontario: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/diseases-and-conditions/infectious-diseases/respiratory-diseases/influenza>
- d) Immunize Canada: <https://www.immunize.ca/>
- e) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) - Seasonal Influenza: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/>
- f) ServiceOntario, INFOline: 1-866-532-3161 toll free in Ontario (TTY: 1-800-387-5559)
- g) For a list of public health unit locations, please visit: <http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/phu/locations.aspx>

Version française disponible en communiquant avec le 1 866 532-3161 ATS: 1 800 387-5559 (site web: www.health.gov.on.ca/fr/ccom/flu/)