

## HALTON REGION PUBLIC HEALTH • Office of the Medical Officer of Health

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TO: Halton Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Emergency Departments, other Healthcare Providers

FROM: Dr. Joanna Oda, Associate Medical Officer of Health

DATE: October 31, 2023

RE: Flu, COVID-19 & RSV vaccine updates; potential delays with special order vaccines

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### QUICK FACTS

- Halton Region Public Health has distributed our full allocation of Fluzone® High-Dose Quadrivalent (QIV-HD) influenza vaccine.
- Seniors 65 years of age and older can receive the standard dose QIV or Fluad® Adjuvanted Trivalent Inactivated (TIV-adj) vaccines.
- The fall influenza and COVID-19 vaccination campaign has launched for the general population. All persons 6 months of age and older, without contraindications, may be offered an annual influenza vaccine and a fall COVID-19 vaccine. Influenza and COVID-19 vaccines can be administered in the same visit.
- Due to an increased volume of special orders, delivery of these vaccines may be delayed. High-risk vaccines will continue to be prioritized to avoid delivery delays.
- A publicly-funded dose of the RSV vaccine is available to Long-Term Care Home residents and residents of Retirement Homes that are licensed to provide dementia care.

### KEY MESSAGES FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

#### Influenza Vaccines

- QIV-HD is no longer available on the Vaccine Order Form. Submitted orders for QIV-HD that could not be fulfilled have been substituted with Fluad® (TIV-adj).
- Fluad® is only indicated for persons 65 years of age and older. It includes an adjuvant, which is designed to improve the immune response to the vaccine. This is important because older adults may not have as strong an immune response to the influenza vaccine compared to younger people.
- Fluad® is designed to protect against three strains of the influenza virus: two influenza A viruses and one influenza B virus.
- No studies have directly compared QIV-HD and TIV-adj formulations or TIV-adj and QIV standard dose formulations. But, when considering use of TIV-adj vs. QIV standard dose in those 65 years of age and older, given the increased burden of disease associated with influenza A(H3N2) in older adults and the addition of an adjuvant, health care providers may prefer to use the TIV-adj vaccine, especially in those with multiple co-morbid conditions and compromised health status.

- As per the [National Advisory Committee on Immunization \(NACI\)](#) in the absence of a specific product such as QIV-HD, any of the available age-appropriate influenza vaccines should be used. All vaccines protect against the flu. The most important thing is for individuals to be vaccinated.

### **RSV Vaccine**

- Adults 60 years of age and older who are residents of a Long-Term Care Home, including Elder Care Lodges, or a retirement home that is licensed to provide dementia care, are eligible to receive a publicly-funded dose of the RSV vaccine Arexvy this fall.
- Halton Region Public Health will be sharing further details about the publicly-funded RSV program with eligible facilities in the coming days.
- As a precautionary measure, the RSV vaccine should not be routinely co-administered with COVID-19 or influenza vaccines. [Public Health Ontario](#) and the [Ministry of Health](#) recommend the RSV vaccine should be administered at least 14 days before or after administering other vaccines. There are scenarios where based on the provider's judgement, the benefits outweigh the risks, and a shorter interval or co-administration of the RSV vaccine with COVID-19 and influenza vaccines should be considered.

### **KEY MESSAGES FOR PATIENTS**

- All age-appropriate flu vaccines protect against the flu.
- Individuals 6 months of age and older (without contraindications) can get their flu vaccine with the COVID-19 vaccine.
- The RSV vaccine has been approved for use in adults 60 years of age and older, but is only publicly-funded for residents of Long-Term Care Homes and Retirement Homes that are licensed to provide dementia care.
- Adults 60 years of age and older who are not eligible for a publicly-funded dose of the RSV vaccine, may choose to purchase this vaccine privately through a pharmacy.

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

- [2023/2024 Universal Influenza Immunization Program \(UIIP\), Ministry of Health](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccine Guidance, Ministry of Health](#)
- [Clinical Considerations for the Co-Administration of RSV, COVID-19 and Influenza Vaccines Among Older Adults in Long-Term Care Facilities](#)

Please report all suspected/confirmed cases of [Diseases of Public Health Significance](#) (only report COVID-19 cases occurring in high-risk settings) to Public Health immediately by calling 311, 905-825-6000 or toll free at 1-866-442-5866.

PLEASE PROVIDE A COPY TO ALL PHYSICIANS IN YOUR OFFICE AND/OR POST IN EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS AND PHYSICIAN LOUNGES. IF YOU HAVE ANY ISSUES WITH THIS ATTACHMENT, PLEASE EMAIL [DOCTORS@HALTON.CA](mailto:DOCTORS@HALTON.CA).