

2023/24 Universal Influenza Immunization Program

Update for York Region health care providers

September 26, 2023

The upcoming influenza (flu) season is quickly approaching and demand for flu vaccines is expected to be high. York Region Public Health (YRPH) is here to help health care providers implement and prepare for Ontario's [Universal Influenza Immunization Program \(UIIP\)](#).

With the co-circulation of respiratory diseases such as COVID-19 and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), flu vaccination will be critical to protect the health of individuals, families, and communities, as well as mitigate impacts on our healthcare system. Based on evidence out of the southern hemisphere, we anticipate this year's flu vaccine to be a good match to circulating strains. Your continued effort and support for vaccination play an important role as we enter the fall.

The flu vaccine is available free of charge for individuals who live, work, or attend school in Ontario and is recommended for everyone six months of age and over, without contraindications.

UIIP Implementation

The following are 2023-2024 UIIP implementation documents released by the Ministry of Health that provide further information about flu vaccine products and information about vaccination for different age groups. These documents, along with up-to-date vaccination information, can also be found on York Region's [Vaccination for HealthCare Professionals webpage](#).

- [Chief Medical Officer of Health's memo to Health Care Providers](#)
- [Health Care Provider Q&As Information for the 2023-2024 Influenza Season](#)
- [Health Care Provider Q&As Information for Individuals 6 months to 64 years of age](#)
- [Health Care Provider Q&As Information for Individuals ≥ 65 years of age](#)

Publicly Funded Influenza Vaccines Available for 2023-2024 UIIP

The publicly funded influenza vaccines available for the 2023/2024 UIIP include Quadrivalent Inactivated Vaccine (QIV) for all individuals six months of age and older. High-Dose Quadrivalent Inactivated Vaccine (QIV-HD) and Adjuvanted Trivalent Inactivated Vaccine (TIV-adj) will be available in limited quantities for individuals 65 years of age and older.

Immunization Priority

As per guidance of the National Advisory Committee on Immunization ([NACI](#)), the following individuals should be prioritized to receive the flu vaccine as soon as it is available because they have a high risk of flu-related complications or have a higher chance of requiring hospitalization due to the flu:

- Residents of retirement homes and other congregate living settings
- People above 65 years of age
- Pregnant individuals
- Children six months to 5 years of age
- Individuals who are from a First Nation, Inuit, or Métis community, and/or who self-identify as First Nation, Inuit or Métis, and their household member
- Members of racialized and other equity-deserving communities
- Individuals six months of age and older with the following underlying health conditions:
 - Cardiac or pulmonary disorders
 - Diabetes mellitus or other metabolic disease
 - Cancer
 - Conditions or medication that compromise the immune system

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- Renal disease
- Anemia or hemoglobinopathy
- Neurologic or neurodevelopment conditions
- Morbid obesity (body mass index of ≥ 40)
- Children and adolescents (six months to 18 years) undergoing treatment with acetylsalicylic acid for long periods

Health care workers and first responders are also eligible for early immunization as they can transmit the flu to high-risk individuals listed above.

Flu vaccines may be offered to the general population starting October 30, 2023.

York Region's Influenza Vaccine Supply, Distribution, and Ordering Process

In the coming weeks, YRPH will notify health care providers about the availability of flu vaccines and additional information about the vaccine ordering process. Initial flu vaccine orders received from providers are anticipated to be fulfilled between early- to late- October.

YRPH works closely with the Ministry of Health to allocate and distribute vaccines equitably to locations and providers in accordance with provincial and local vaccine supply. The initial supply of vaccines will be prioritized for distribution to hospitals and long-term care homes (LTCHs). As our local vaccine supply is replenished by the Ontario Government Pharmaceutical and Medical Supply Service (OGPMSS), flu vaccines will be distributed to retirement homes, other settings with vulnerable populations, physicians, and all other providers and organizations starting in early- to mid-October as per the Ministry of Health's flu vaccine distribution plan.

Important Reminders

- ✓ Do not book appointments prior to receiving vaccines, as there may be unanticipated restrictions on the availability of vaccines or other impacts on deliveries.
- ✓ Large-scale flu community vaccination clinics should be held in November to ensure an adequate supply of vaccines can be ordered based on the available provincial and local supply.
- ✓ Offer the vaccine to eligible high-risk individuals, health care workers and first responders as soon as it becomes available at your location. Refer to the list of high-risk individuals listed above.
- ✓ Seniors, 65 years and older should get immunized as soon as the flu vaccine is available. **All brands of the vaccine protect against the flu; do not wait for a particular product and delay vaccination.**
- ✓ Consider the co-administration of COVID-19 and flu vaccines.

Thank you for the tremendous work you are doing to support vaccination in York Region.

For more information on 2023-2024 UIIP, contact the Vaccine Inventory program, please call 1-877-464-9675 ext. 74033 or e-mail to vaccineinventory@york.ca.