

Getting Ready for Flu Season 2019-20

Update to York Region Health Care Providers as of August 14, 2019

York Region Public Health is preparing for the upcoming influenza season and the 2019-2020 Universal Influenza Immunization Program (UIIP). Highlighted below is key information on how we have been getting ready, and some information and required actions for you to prepare for the upcoming season.

York Region Public Health (YRPH) Improves Service Delivery this Influenza Season by:

1. Requesting increased flu vaccine allocation from the Ministry of Health (the Ministry), to attempt to reduce influenza vaccine shortages and distribution delays in York Region.
2. Collaborating with the Ministry and the Ontario Government Pharmaceutical and Medical Supply Service (OGPMSS) for emergency vaccine pickups by YRPH, to help health care providers receive the influenza vaccines as quickly as possible.
3. Increasing the refrigerated storage capacity at YRPH vaccine depot to accommodate the high demand during flu season and to safeguard the viability, potency and integrity of the influenza vaccines.
4. Implementing a phone queue line so you can speak to someone directly regarding the status of your vaccine order, rather than leaving a voicemail.
5. Recruiting a team of Registered Pharmacy Technicians and a Public Health Pharmacist, experienced and knowledgeable staff who can help meet the needs of health care providers.

How should you prepare for the upcoming influenza season and UIIP?

Ensure that you have applied to participate in the UIIP. Organizations that already order and receive other publicly funded vaccine(s) do not need to re-apply to order and receive influenza vaccine this year. Please check the Ministry website for more information on the UIIP application process:

<http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/flu/uiip/default.aspx>

YRPH will notify you when influenza vaccines are available to order and will provide you with updates related to UIIP once received from the Ministry. Please aim to schedule flu vaccine clinics after you have received your flu vaccine order to ensure you have sufficient supply for your patients. As with other publicly-funded vaccines, information on how to order influenza vaccines and the vaccine order form can be found at york.ca/vaccineinventory.

Some additional reminders for the upcoming flu season:

- Prioritize high-risk individuals (e.g. pregnant women, seniors, infants over 6 months and young children, those with underlying health conditions) to receive the flu shot during the initial weeks of the UIIP, to ensure the most vulnerable members of our community are protected against influenza as early as possible.
- All UIIP participating organizations and health care providers must submit vaccine refrigerator temperature logs along with each influenza vaccine order placed.

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- YRPH influenza vaccines distribution to health care providers is contingent on YRPH receiving the vaccines from the Ministry on a timely basis. In addition, the quantities of flu vaccine YRPH receives are based on allocations determined by the Ministry.

Questions about vaccines? Call York Region Public Health

You can call us at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 74033, Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. to speak with Public Health's Vaccine Inventory team or send an email to vaccineinventory@york.ca.

Connect to york.ca/healthprofessionals for insights on current public health topics, up-to-date information and resources from York Region Public Health's programs and services. Visit the **Announcements and Resources** page for our latest communications and to subscribe to our quarterly e-newsletter *Public Health Matters*, which covers topics relevant to today's health care professionals.