



September 2014

Dear Colleagues,

The Canadian Pharmacists Association (CPhA), as a member of Immunize Canada, is pleased to provide you with the most recent and relevant information for the 2014-2015 influenza immunization season. As pharmacists, we play an active role in preventing the spread of influenza by helping our patients make informed decisions about the annual flu shot.

2014-2015 influenza vaccines

It is estimated that 10-20% of the population becomes infected with influenza each year, resulting in an average of 20,000 hospitalizations and 4,000 deaths in Canada. Vaccination is recognized as the cornerstone for preventing or attenuating influenza. This year, for the first time, a quadrivalent vaccine is available, in addition to the trivalent vaccine. The seasonal trivalent vaccine for 2014-2015 contains the following three components: an A/California/7/2009 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus, an A/Texas/50/2012 (H3N2)-like virus and a B/Massachusetts/2/2012-like virus. The quadrivalent vaccine has the above three components plus a B/Brisbane/60/2008-like virus.

Updates to NACI guidelines

Based on recent evidence, the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) recommends influenza immunization for all healthy individuals aged 6 months and older, in addition to those at high risk of influenza-related complications, those capable of transmitting influenza to individuals at high risk of complications and those who provide essential community services. While the 2014-2015 NACI statement does not suggest that all individuals require the quadrivalent vaccine, it does suggest that in the event that supplies of the quadrivalent vaccine are limited, children and adolescents should preferentially receive the quadrivalent vaccine as influenza B more frequently occurs in this patient population. NACI has clarified last year's statement by specifying that the live attenuated influenza vaccine is the preferred vaccine in children under six years of age. NACI has also specified that individuals with egg allergies may receive either the trivalent or the quadrivalent influenza vaccine without a prior influenza vaccine skin test and with the full dose in any settings where vaccines are routinely administered, provided that immunizers have the necessary equipment to respond to a vaccine emergency at all times. You can find out more about these changes online in the updated [NACI guidelines](#).

Resources to promote immunization in your pharmacy

CPhA has reviewed the NACI recommendations and updated our [influenza immunization resources](#) for pharmacists, including our **Immunization Guide for Pharmacists**, a step-by-step guide to help you initiate an immunization program in your community.



CANADIAN
PHARMACISTS
ASSOCIATION

ASSOCIATION DES
PHARMACIENS
DU CANADA

These updated resources can also help you educate patients, raise awareness and promote immunization in your pharmacy .

- A bag stuffer containing information for patients
- A poster on seasonal influenza to display in your pharmacy
- A handout on what health professionals need to know about influenza

For a reminder of best practices around immunization, take a look at “[Immunization Competencies for Health Professionals](#),” from the Public Health Agency of Canada. Additional posters and other influenza vaccination promotional materials are also available online from both CPhA and [Immunize Canada](#).

Thank you for your dedication to helping keep Canadians healthy.

For more information or to provide feedback or suggestions, please contact Phil Emberley by email at pemberley@pharmacists.ca or by phone at 613-523-7877 ext. 220 or 1-800-917-9489 ext. 220.

Sincerely,

Jane Farnham
Chair, Canadian Pharmacists Association