

THE FLU | INFLUENZA

September 2012



CANADIAN
PHARMACISTS
ASSOCIATION
ASSOCIATION DES
PHARMACIENS
DU CANADA

Dear Pharmacists,

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 2012–2013 immunization season. As pharmacists, you play an active role in preventing the spread of influenza by helping your patients and pharmacy staff make informed decisions about getting the annual flu shot.

Each year, influenza affects millions of Canadians, with an average 20,000 hospitalizations and 4,000 deaths. Vaccination is recognized as the cornerstone for preventing or attenuating influenza. The seasonal trivalent vaccine for 2012–2013 contains three components; an A/California/7/2009 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus, an A/Victoria/361/2011 (H3N2)-like virus, and a B/Wisconsin/1/2010-like virus (B Yamagata lineage).

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) recommends immunization priority for persons 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. New additions to the high risk group include children 24 to 59 months, meaning that ALL children 6 to 59 months, regardless of chronic complications, should be immunized. Accordingly, individuals who provide regular child care to children 6 to 59 months are also recommended to be immunized. The influenza vaccine is still recommended for all Canadians who have no contraindications.

New this year, NACI recommends avoiding re-vaccination of individuals where Guillain Barré Syndrome developed within six weeks after a previous influenza immunization, a change from the previous recommendation of 8 weeks. You can find out more about these changes in the NACI guidelines available at www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/naci-ccni.

For many years, the CPhA has worked in collaboration with the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) to provide influenza information and practice tools to pharmacists. In 2012, CPhA began a project, funded by PHAC, to explore the challenges encountered in the use of antiviral medications in remote and isolated communities during the 2009 H1N1 pandemic. Both pharmacists and nurses who practised in these communities during the pandemic were consulted in order to identify both challenges and successes in providing medication and services at that time. The final project report will identify both options and recommendations for future pandemic influenza outbreaks.

The following materials will help you educate patients, raise awareness and promote immunization in your pharmacy:

- Two pocket guides on seasonal influenza and pneumococcal vaccination
- Three posters on seasonal influenza, pneumococcal vaccine and the difference between a cold or flu

CPhA has updated our influenza immunization resources for pharmacists, according to the NACI recommendations, including our newly updated Influenza Immunization Guide for Pharmacists available on the CPhA website at www.pharmacists.ca/flu. As well, you can find the document, Immunization Competencies for Health Professionals, on PHAC's website, <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/im/ic-ci-eng.php>. Additional posters and other influenza vaccination promotional materials are also available from CCIAP at www.immunize.ca.

For more information or to provide feedback or suggestions, please contact Bridget Lett at blett@pharmacists.ca or 1-800-917-9489 ext. 218.

Sincerely,

Paula MacNeil, B.Sc. (Pharm)
President, Canadian Pharmacists Association

MAKE A HEALTHY CHOICE . . .
Protect yourself and those around you.

GET THE FLU SHOT!

