



September 2015

Dear Colleagues,

As a member of Immunize Canada, the Canadian Pharmacists Association (CPhA) is pleased to provide you with the most recent and relevant information for the 2015-2016 influenza immunization season. Pharmacists have an important role as immunizers, are a reliable source of information for patients, and also play an important role in preventing the spread of infectious diseases, such as influenza. Public knowledge of vaccines is inconsistent, leading to assumptions that may jeopardize both personal and public health; pharmacists have a vital role in helping patients make informed decisions.

2015-2016 influenza vaccines

Between 10-20% of population becomes infected with influenza each year, with the highest rates of infection occurring in children aged 5-9 years. Serious illness and sequelae disproportionately affect children less than 2 years of age, older person (over 65) and those with underlying medical conditions. Each year about 4,000 deaths occur in Canada due to influenza. The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) [Statement on Seasonal Influenza Vaccine for 2015-2016](#) identifies those particularly at risk given their susceptibility to severe influenza illness and complications due to influenza.

In 2014, a quadrivalent vaccine was first made available in Canada. This year, the guidelines again support the efficacy of both trivalent and quadrivalent vaccines and identify specific patient populations where the quadrivalent vaccine is preferred.

The seasonal trivalent vaccine for 2015-2016 contains the following components: A/California/7/2009 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus; A/Switzerland/9715293/2013 (H3N2)-like virus; B/Phuket/3073/2013-like virus (Yamagata lineage). The quadrivalent vaccine also contains B/Brisbane/60/2008-like virus (Victoria lineage)

Updates to the NACI guidelines

Based on the most current available evidence, NACI recommends influenza immunization for all individuals 6 months of age and older (noting product-specific age indications and contraindications), with particular focus on people at high risk of influenza-related complications or hospitalization, including all pregnant women, and people capable of transmitting influenza to those at high risk. A further description of those patients considered at high risk for influenza complications is provided in the [Influenza Immunization Guide for Pharmacists 2015](#).



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Resources to promote immunization in your pharmacy

Following the release of the annual NACI recommendations, CPhA reviews them and updates our influenza immunization resources for pharmacists, including our [Influenza Immunization Guide for Pharmacists 2015](#), a step-by-step guide to help you to initiate an immunization program in your community.

The following are links to these documents, which reside on the Public Health Agency of Canada's immunization web pages: <http://healthykanadians.gc.ca/diseases-conditions-maladies-affections/disease-maladie/flu-grippe/professionals-professionnels-eng.php>.

The above resource will soon be updated with influenza resources that you can use in your practice, including resources to share with your patients.

As a reminder of best practices around immunization, take a look at "[Immunization Competencies for Health Professionals](#)" from the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Thank you for your dedication to helping keep Canadians healthy, and I wish you success in administering your influenza vaccination campaign in your pharmacy in 2015-2016.

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,

Carlo Berardi
Chair, Canadian Pharmacists Association