

Influenza Vaccines for Adults 65 Years of Age and Older Question and Answer Document August 2024

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1. What vaccine is recommended and publicly funded in BC for adults 65 years of age and older during the 2024/25 influenza season?

Adults 65 years and older have an increased risk of severe influenza illness, hospitalization, and death compared with younger populations. (1, 2) Use of enhanced influenza vaccines can be more effective in averting serious outcomes in older adults. FLUAD® (adjuvanted TIV), an enhanced influenza vaccine, is the recommended vaccine for adults 65 years of age and older in BC. This vaccine is designed specifically to enhance immunogenicity in adults 65 years of age and older through the use of an adjuvant.

In the 2023/24 respiratory season, FLUZONE® High-Dose Quadrivalent vaccine was publicly funded for individuals 65 years of age and older living in long-term care, assisted living facilities and First Nations communities, while FLUAD® was publicly funded for all other individuals 65 years of age and older. FLUZONE® High-Dose Quadrivalent was available on a time-limited basis via the federal government; however, in the 2024/25 season, this vaccine is no longer publicly-funded in BC.

2. What are the differences between FLUAD® and FLUZONE® High-Dose Quadrivalent influenza vaccines? Is one of these vaccines recommended over another for adults 65 years of age and older?

These vaccines enhance the immune response to influenza antigens in older adults through two different means.

FLUZONE® High-Dose Quadrivalent contains a four-fold higher antigen content (hemagglutinin or HA) per dose than standard-dose (SD) QIV formulations.

FLUAD® has the same HA content per strain as standard-dose formulation vaccines, but is adjuvanted with MF59®, an oil-in-water squalene-containing emulsion approved for use in pandemic and seasonal influenza vaccines in many countries. This vaccine is only available in trivalent formulation with a single B strain (see Question 3).

There is evidence from both randomized controlled trials and observational studies favouring the use of enhanced influenza vaccines including FLUZONE® High-Dose Quadrivalent and FLUAD® for adults 65 years of age and older when compared to standard-dose unadjuvanted influenza vaccines for prevention of influenza-related hospitalization. However, no definitive conclusion can be reached regarding the superiority of any of these vaccines over one another as there is limited evidence directly comparing FLUZONE® High-Dose Quadrivalent and FLUAD® against each other. (2)

3. Is there an expected impact of the additional B strain in QIV products that is not included in FLUAD®?

The absence of the influenza B/Yamagata lineage virus from FLUAD® is not expected to have much, if any, impact on vaccine protection compared to quadrivalent vaccine as there have been no confirmed naturally occurring B/Yamagata lineage virus detections after March 2020. (3)

Furthermore, the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) has provided support to [transition from quadrivalent to trivalent influenza vaccines](#), with the removal of the B/Yamagata strain from influenza vaccines going forward.

4. What is the safety profile for FLUAD®?

FLUAD® has been associated with higher rates of local (e.g., pain, erythema) and systemic (myalgia, malaise, headache) reactions in the 7 days following vaccine receipt relative to standard-dose influenza vaccines. These reactions are typically mild to moderate in nature and of short duration, usually resolving within 3 days. Serious adverse events were reported infrequently and at similar rates as following standard-dose vaccines.

5. In the event that FLUAD® is not available, can standard-dose vaccine be offered to adults 65 years of age and older?

In the event that FLUAD® is not available locally, any other vaccine authorized for use in this age group should be offered instead of recommending that individuals wait for FLUAD® supply or travel to receive FLUAD®. Those 65 years of age and older who receive a standard-dose influenza vaccine within the season are not advised to receive a subsequent dose of FLUAD® within the same season.

6. What information can I share with clients requesting FLUZONE® High-Dose Quadrivalent vaccine?

Clients seeking FLUZONE® High-Dose Quadrivalent vaccine can be advised that the publicly-funded option of FLUAD® is expected to provide similar protection and there is no evidence available to indicate that one vaccine is preferable over the other. NACI does not indicate a preferential recommendation for any particular enhanced influenza vaccine over other enhanced influenza vaccines authorized for individuals 65 years of age and older. Clients who wish to receive FLUZONE® High-Dose Quadrivalent vaccine can be advised that this product may be available for purchase at pharmacies and travel clinics throughout BC.

7. Where can I obtain more information about these vaccines?

The following sources of information are available online:

- NACI Statement on [Seasonal influenza vaccine for 2024-2025](#)
- NACI [Supplemental guidance on influenza vaccination in adults 65 years of age and older](#)
- FLUAD® [product monograph](#) and [Seqirus information for the public](#)
- FLUZONE® High-Dose Quadrivalent [product monograph](#) and [Sanofi Pasteur information for the public](#)

References

1. Public Health Agency of Canada. Canadian Immunization Guide Chapter on Influenza and Statement on Seasonal Influenza Vaccine for 2024–2025. 2024 [cited 2024 Aug 2]. Available from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/vaccines-immunization/national-advisory-committee-immunization-statement-seasonal-influenza-vaccine-2024-2025.html>.
2. Public Health Agency of Canada. Supplemental guidance on influenza vaccination in adults 65 years of age and older. 2024 [cited 2024 Aug 2]. Available from <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/vaccines-immunization/national-advisory-committee-immunization-supplemental-guidance-influenza-vaccination-adults-65-years-older.html#a9>
3. Recommended composition of influenza virus vaccines for use in the 2024-2025 northern hemisphere influenza season. 2024 [cited 2024 Aug 2]. Available from: https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/influenza/who-influenza-recommendations/vcm-northern-hemisphere-recommendation-2024-2025/recommended-composition-of-influenza-virus-vaccines-for-use-in-the-2024-2025-northern-hemisphere-influenza-season.pdf?sfvrsn=2e9d2194_7&download=true