

# Flu Vaccination 2022 – Frequently Asked Questions

The FAQ below groups the major questions asked by Family Physicians and responses from VCH and the North Vancouver Division as of **October 19th, 2022**. We will update this FAQ as we receive new information from VCH and further questions from FPs.

For any questions or comments about the FAQs, please email us at [northshore@nsdivision.ca](mailto:northshore@nsdivision.ca)

## **1. What is the overall strategy for flu vaccination 2022?**

The provincial influenza vaccination campaign started in October. Influenza vaccines will be offered to BC residents at community COVID-19 booster clinics, pharmacies, as well as physician and nurse practitioner offices.

## **2. Is a free vaccine available to everyone this year?**

Yes. The Influenza vaccine is recommended and provided free for all BC residents  $\geq 6$  months of age. In particular, the influenza vaccine should be offered to individuals at high risk of influenza complications (children 6-59 months, seniors, pregnant women, people 5-64 years with underlying chronic health conditions), those in contact with people at high risk including visitors to health care facilities, people who provide essential community service providers, and anyone else who wishes to reduce their risk of influenza.

## **3. Will there be enough flu vaccine this year?**

There will be enough supply in BC for all residents who want to be immunized. Similar to last year, participating offices will receive a start-up supply. As VCH expects several vaccine deliveries, clinics will be able to re-order modest amounts.

## **4. What is the vaccine distribution schedule?**

The exact vaccine distribution schedule depends on manufacturer delivery dates.

Like prior years, VCH prioritizes immunization for long-term care homes, hospital pharmacies and healthcare professionals, followed by distribution to family practices and others.

*VCH released the initial vaccine allocations to family practices during the week of October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022.*

VCH expects to receive additional vaccine supply mid-October.

**5. Is it possible to have the vaccine delivered to my clinic?**

Yes. The North Vancouver Division has once again partnered with MTS Logistics/Medi-Tran Services to support primary care clinics with vaccination delivery during October 2022 to March 2023. This Division-funded support allows delivery of vaccinations in a safe and timely manner from your designated CHC vaccination depot directly to your clinic.

*This year clinics can have their initial allocation and re-orders delivered by MTS.*

Your clinic should have received a communication from VCH about initial vaccine allocations and the option for delivery of your initial allocation. If you haven't received VCH communication or haven't replied, please email [NSbiologicals@vch.ca](mailto:NSbiologicals@vch.ca) and copy [vaccine@mtslogistics.com](mailto:vaccine@mtslogistics.com) if you want delivery right away.

**6. Our clinic requested delivery of our initial allocation. What happens next?**

VCH will contact the clinic to discuss what day/time is best for vaccine delivery. This information will be passed to MTS.

**7. Our clinic wants to pick up our initial allocation. What's the process?**

VCH will contact the clinic to let the clinic know the date that you can come to your usual local health unit for pickup. If you don't hear from VCH, please email: [NSbiologicals@vch.ca](mailto:NSbiologicals@vch.ca)

**8. Who is allowed to pick up vaccine?**

VCH allows anyone associated with the clinic to pick up vaccine. It does NOT have to be a physician. Everyone is expected to transport the vaccine in a way that supports the cold chain.

**9. How should I transport the vaccine?**

This is unchanged from prior years. Best practice requires a cooler, cold water blankets and ice packs. Keep in mind that pre-filled syringe format products require much more space than multi-dose vials for transport & storage.

**10. What vaccines will I receive?**

Vaccines available this year include Fluzone Quadrivalent, Flumist and Fluad. You will likely be offered some of each product. Flumist is a popular product, and we are not likely to have enough for all providers.

**11. What impacts which vaccines VCH receives and when? Does VCH withhold vaccine distribution?**

The supply chain for flu vaccines involves manufacturing and then transport between several organizations. Flu vaccine is delivered from the different manufacturers on

different dates to the BCCDC (the provincial depot), and from there it is distributed to the Health Authorities.

VCH distributes all of the vaccines it receives as quickly as it can once it is received centrally from the BCCDC.

**12. Why can't I receive my entire allocation now?**

VCH receives 50% of its total influenza vaccine supply in late September (for distribution in early October). The initial allocation allows the maximum number of community providers to have access to vaccine, while VCH waits for additional supply in October.

**13. When can I get more vaccine?**

VCH expects to receive another shipment of vaccine by mid-October and will be ready to fill re-up orders once received.

**14. When can I schedule high-volume vaccination clinics for my patients?**

We recommend that you schedule your high-volume clinics based on vaccine distributed to your office in early October. You may be able to book additional high-volume clinics in late October; please wait for supply updates and let us know how much vaccine you may need for those late clinics (based on appointment bookings). Please email [NSbiologicals@vch.ca](mailto:NSbiologicals@vch.ca)

**15. Can I get less vaccine than prior years? I won't be immunizing as many patients this year**

Yes. You only need to request the amount of vaccine that you realistically expect to use this year. Vaccine not used in your office is not available to other locations. We really appreciate you taking a realistic assessment of vaccine utilization in your office and supporting placement of orders accordingly.

**16. Is the recommended wait time post-injection still 15 minutes?**

VCH Public Health and the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) still recommend a 15-minute post-injection observation period.

*A shorter observation period between 5-15 minutes may be considered if the conditions below are met:*

- Client has received influenza vaccine before and did not have a severe reaction
- No history of immediate post-vaccination reactions following any vaccines (e.g., syncope)
- There's another adult who can monitor the vaccine recipient for 15 minutes
- The vaccine recipient is not operating a motorized or another wheeled transportation device for a min of 15 minutes (so they can wait in the parking lot for the total 15 minutes)
- The vaccine recipient/responsible adult knows when to seek post vaccination advice/medical assistance

- The client agrees to wait in the post-vaccination waiting area for the reduced observation period

**17. Should I wait until the “right” vaccine is available before vaccinating patients?**

As in prior years, the recommendation is to not defer and use the best option you have on hand to vaccinate patients rather than waiting until other types are available.

**18. How much vaccine will I receive in my initial vaccine allotment?**

To ensure that every community provider has access to vaccine as quickly as possible, VCH sets an initial distribution amount based on your clinic’s total vaccine doses administered in 2021. ***If you are planning higher volume vaccination clinics and you know how much you expect to need for those events, please contact us ASAP and will work with you and VCH to ensure you have enough vaccine for those patients.***

**19. What proportion of injection vs inhalable vaccines will I receive?**

The initial proportions will be based on your 2021 usage.

**20. How do I request more vaccine?**

This process remains the same as prior years. You can email (preferred) or fax your local CHC that normally supplies your biologicals. The CHC will contact your clinic by email once the order is filled. VCH is targeting to have your order ready for pickup within 1-2 business days. If you want your re-orders delivered via MTS courier, please email both [NSbiologicals@vch.ca](mailto:NSbiologicals@vch.ca) and [vaccine@mtslogistics.com](mailto:vaccine@mtslogistics.com).

**21. How can my patients access vaccination clinics?**

Your patients can find appointments through [Get Vaccinated BC](#). Eligible patients can get an influenza vaccine and a COVID-19 fall booster at the same appointment.

**22. Will BC Children’s Hospital Family Immunization Clinic operate this year?**

Yes. According to VCH, BCCH will operate its immunization clinic.

**23. Is the temporary fee code for immunizing patients launched in 2020 still applicable?**

Yes. Effective October 1, 2022, a new temporary fee code for adult respiratory immunization is available, which will allow adult influenza and pneumococcal immunizations to be billed in addition to an office visit (consult, prenatal visit, counseling etc.).

The temporary fee of \$5.45 per immunization (10040) will allow a medically necessary visit to be billed in addition to the immunization. If the primary purpose of the visit is for immunization, the fee item 10041 (Respiratory immunization w/o visit- \$14.00) using ICD-9 code V048 for influenza and/or V05 for pneumococcal applies. A visit cannot be billed if the primary purpose is an immunization. More information may be found [here](#).

**24. What are the clinic protocols and PPE requirements I should follow for patient visits?**

The recently updated [COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for Community-Based Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Nurses and Midwives in Clinic Settings](#) outlines appropriate infection prevention and control measures given what we now know about the current risk of community transmission. The guidance includes updated information on the appropriate use of personal protective equipment, physical distancing and capacity limits, and screening for COVID-19 symptoms.

The medical mask [requirements](#) for health-care settings, including primary care provider offices, remain in effect.

**25. Can the Division help me get PPE?**

Yes. The [Health PPE Portal](#) is available to order PPE and critical supplies for your medical practice free of charge.

*If you need help accessing the PPE portal please contact us at [northshore@nsdivision.ca](mailto:northshore@nsdivision.ca)*

**26. Can patients get a flu shot at a BC pharmacy?**

Individuals will need to register with [Get Vaccinated](#) to select a pharmacy in their region that is providing publicly funded vaccinations.

Keep in mind the following if you refer patients to pharmacies:

- Pharmacists may immunize children 4 years and above with an injectable vaccine and may administer intranasal immunizations for children 2 years and above. However, some pharmacists choose/prefer to not immunize children that young.
- Eligible patients can get an influenza vaccine and a COVID-19 fall booster at the same appointment.

**27. What if I cannot vaccinate my patients this year (illness, risk, space, etc.)**

We are here to support you. Please reach out to us at [northshore@nsdivision.ca](mailto:northshore@nsdivision.ca) to discuss options available to your patients.