

Clinician Fact Sheet

Influenza Immunization for Adult and Pediatric Patients
Undergoing Cancer Treatment

Accompanies: Clinical Practice Guideline SUPP-002



The assessment, prevention, rehabilitation, and management strategies outlined in this summary and accompanying guideline apply to adult and pediatric cancer patients. Refer to the full clinical practice guideline and evidence tables for a detailed description of the clinical questions, recommendations, guideline development methodology, and references.

General Principles

Annual administration of the **inactivated** influenza vaccine **is recommended** for most adult and pediatric patients 6 months of age and older with cancer.

Live influenza immunizations **are contraindicated** for all adult and pediatric cancer patients. Patients with a severely weakened immune system (**hospitalized and in protective isolation**) should avoid contact with those who received the live nasal spray influenza immunization for a period of at least two weeks following administration.

Patients are responsible for making their own influenza immunization appointments at their local public health unit, influenza immunization clinic, or family physician's office.

Influenza vaccines that are included in the 2023/24 Provincially Funded Program

| Product | Standard Dose Quadrivalent Inactivated Influenza Vaccine | | High-dose Quadrivalent Inactivated Vaccine |
|------------------------|---|-----------------|--|
| Influenza Vaccine Name | Fluzone® Quadrivalent | FluLaval® Tetra | Fluzone® High-Dose Quadrivalent |
| Dose | 0.5 mL | | 0.7 mL |
| Age Group | 6 months of age and older Note: Individuals 65 years of age and older should be offered Fluzone® High-Dose influenza vaccine as first option. | | 65 years of age and older |

Timing of Inactivated Influenza Immunization

Although **inactivated** influenza vaccine can be administered safely at any time before, during or after immunosuppression, every effort should be made to time immunization so that optimal immunogenicity will be achieved.

- **Ideal:** At least 14 days before initiating immunosuppressive therapy.
- **Next Best:** If early immunization is not possible or feasible, delay vaccination until at least 3 months after immunosuppressive therapy has stopped or until such therapy is at the lowest possible level.
- **Exception:** Patients who are treated with B or T cell depleting antibodies (e.g., rituximab), should wait until at least 6 months after the last dose before receiving their inactivated influenza vaccine.

Schedule

| Age group | Vaccination Status | Dosing Schedule |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Children 6 months to < 9 years of age | ≥ 1 dose of seasonal influenza vaccine in any previous season | 1 dose |
| | Never received the seasonal influenza vaccine in a previous influenza season | 2 doses with a minimum interval of 4 weeks between doses. |
| Persons ≥ 9 years of age | Not applicable | 1 dose |

Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplant (HSCT)

If the patient is at least 6 months post HSCT, they may receive the **inactivated** influenza immunization. Inactivated influenza vaccine can be given as early as 3 months post-transplant at the discretion of the transplant physician during influenza season. Influenza immunization recommendations are the same for autologous and allogeneic transplants, as well as adult and pediatric populations.

CAR T-cell Therapy

HSCT recipients who have started their post-HSCT vaccine series and then had the series interrupted by CAR T-cell therapy should restart their vaccine series. **Inactivated** influenza immunization can be given as early as 3 months post CAR T-cell therapy.

Patients treated with CAR T-cell therapy **without a prior history of HSCT** who received influenza vaccine pre-CAR T-cell therapy are eligible to restart their influenza vaccine series at least 3 months post-CAR T-cell therapy. If a clearance letter has been received to proceed with inactivated vaccines, consultation with their physician is not required.

Administration of Inactivated Influenza Vaccine with COVID-19 Vaccine

The inactivated influenza vaccine **may be co-administered** with, or at any time before or after COVID-19 vaccines to individuals 6 months of age and older. For co-administration with COVID-19 vaccines, refer to the “Administration with Other Products” section in the relevant COVID-19 vaccine biological page on Insite.