



Office of the Medical Health Officers
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SHR Clinicians

Dear Clinicians:

RE: Discussing Influenza Immunization with your Patient

Population and Public Health has started its annual influenza campaign and is encouraging everyone to receive their influenza vaccine. Moreover, this will be the first year for the Immunize or Mask policy for Saskatoon Health Region healthcare workers during influenza season. As a result, you may receive questions about influenza immunization and are offering the following tips and resources to help you with these questions.

Tips:

1. The contraindications for injectable influenza vaccine are as follows:
 - a. Anaphylaxis to a previous dose of influenza vaccine
 - b. Anaphylaxis to any vaccine component except for egg
 - c. Guillain-Barre Syndrome within six weeks of receiving influenza vaccine
 - d. Infants less than six months of age
2. Fluviral vaccine contains no antibiotics.
3. Agriflu vaccine contains no thimerosal or latex.
4. Individuals who are allergic and/or anaphylactic to eggs **can** receive injectable influenza vaccine.
5. Flumist, intranasal vaccine, is a more effective vaccine than injectable influenza vaccine in children aged 2-17 years of age, provided they have no contraindications.
6. Pregnant women can receive injectable influenza vaccine and should be encouraged to get immunized to minimize the risk of adverse birth outcomes.
7. Normal side effects of influenza vaccine include: pain, erythema and swelling around injection site and/or mild to moderate headache, myalgias, malaise, fever, irritability, arthralgia and sweating.
8. If your patient suffered an adverse event following immunization, please ensure the following form is completed and send to the Immunization Clinician at 306-655-4720. Forms are available at: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/im/pdf/raefi-dmcisi-eng.pdf> **[Note: most adverse events following immunization are not a contraindication to getting immunized in the future]**

Resources:

Locations where influenza vaccine is available: www.4flu.ca

Information about vaccine:

Saskatchewan Immunization Manual – Ch. 10 <http://www.health.gov.sk.ca/sim-chapter10>

National Advisory Committee on Immunization: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/naci-ccni/flu-grippe-eng.php>

Thank you to all of you who either immunize your patients or encourage them to get immunized against influenza.

Sincerely,

Dr. Shovita Padhi
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Deputy Medical Health Officer

Healthiest people ~ Healthiest communities ~ Exceptional service