



## Seasonal Influenza Vaccine – Inactivated Frequently Asked Questions:

### Can the inactivated influenza vaccine be given to immunocompromised patients?<sup>1-4</sup>

- The immune response to the inactivated influenza vaccine may not be as strong in the immunocompromised (drug or disease-induced). However, this population is at high-risk of influenza-associated morbidity and vaccination is still highly recommended. Since the vaccine is inactivated, there is no concern that this population will contract influenza from the vaccine.

### Can the inactivated influenza vaccine be given with other vaccines?<sup>3</sup>

- Yes. They may be administered with, or at any time before or after, other inactivated vaccines or live vaccines. Different injection sites and separate needles and syringes should be used if other vaccines are concomitantly administered.

### In what cases should the inactivated influenza vaccine NOT be given? <sup>1-4</sup>

- **People who have a severe, life-threatening anaphylactic reaction to the flu vaccine or any of its ingredients – EXCEPT egg.** The vaccine can be given to people with an egg allergy, regardless of past severe reaction to eggs and without any particular consideration including immunization setting. However, people with a severe egg allergy (or the person administering the vaccine!) may feel more comfortable having the vaccine administered in a setting where emergency services are immediately available.
- **During severe, acute illness.** Vaccine **can** be given to those with mild upper respiratory tract illness, with or without fever
- **History of Oculo-Respiratory Syndrome (ORS) WITH lower respiratory tract symptoms** *ORS consists of one or more of the following: red eyes, acute respiratory symptoms -including respiratory distress, throat tightness and/or chest discomfort - and facial edema.* ORS without lower respiratory tract symptoms may be safely re-immunized with influenza vaccine. Those who experienced ORS with lower respiratory tract symptoms should be assessed by an expert.
- **Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS) within six weeks of a previous influenza vaccination.** *Symptoms of GBS include rapid onset of numbness, weakness, and often paralysis of the legs, arms, breathing muscles, and face. Paralysis is ascending, i.e. it travels up the limbs from fingers and toes towards the torso. Most people recover fully.* Although evidence hasn't definitely shown a link between GBS and seasonal influenza vaccine, the seriousness of GBS warrants caution.
- **Children less than 6 months of age**

**References:**

1. National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) Canadian Immunization Guide Chapter on Influenza and Statement on Seasonal Influenza Vaccine for 2017–2018.
2. RxTx [Internet]. Ottawa (ON): Canadian Pharmacists Association; 2017. CPS online: Fluzone Quadrivalent [updated 2017 Apr; cited 2017 Nov 14]. Available from: <https://www.e-therapeutics.ca>
3. Canadian Immunization Guide: Part 1 - Key Immunization Information. Timing of Vaccine Administration. Pg 10
4. CDC [https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/professionals/acip/acip-2017-18\\_summary-of-recommendations.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/professionals/acip/acip-2017-18_summary-of-recommendations.pdf)