



Community Medicine Newsletter

IMPORTANT NOTICE

To: All Immunizers

Influenza Vaccination Campaign Update Novartis vaccines (Fluad™ and Agriflu™) can now be used

Health Canada has completed its review of safety information for Agriflu™ and Fluad™ and is releasing the two seasonal flu vaccines for immediate use.

This temporary suspension was purely precautionary, based on reports of excessive clumping of protein material noticed in one batch of the vaccines in Italy. That batch was never distributed.

Health Canada has since reviewed the results of its own testing, conducted a health risk assessment, and reviewed information from its European partners and data submitted by Novartis in making its decision. None of the information reviewed indicated a safety issue.

The Public Health Agency of Canada is now advising health care professionals in possession of these vaccines that they can start using them once again. Immunization of seniors no longer needs to be deferred. If you have already received Fluad™, please offer it preferentially to people 65 years of age and older. If you have not yet received Fluad™, please make arrangements with your local community health centre for vaccine pick up. Please note, vaccine for residential care facilities and other licensed facilities will be available starting the week of November 5th.

Agriflu™ can now be requested by special order for people with allergy to thimerosal.

Due to challenges with vaccine supply and distribution, please be patient with us as we get around to filling your orders. Our current priority is to fill initial orders for immunizers who could not pick up their total vaccine order yesterday. We will be pleased to take re-orders from immunizers and will attempt to fill them as completely as possible once we have assessed our remaining inventory.

Thank you for your continued support of the annual influenza vaccine campaign. For any queries please contact the adult immunization nurse on call at 604-983-6700

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian A. O'Connor".

Brian A. O'Connor, MD, MHSc

Medical Health Officer

Vancouver Coastal Health, North Shore