

# Fluzone<sup>®</sup> High Dose Influenza Vaccine

## What is influenza?

- Influenza is caused by a virus that spreads easily by coughing, sneezing and direct contact with nose and throat secretions.
- It can result in hospitalization and death, especially in very young children, the elderly and those who have underlying health conditions.
- Symptoms include sudden onset of fever, cough, chills, muscle aches, a headache and a runny nose.
- Infected people can spread the virus to others before they show any symptoms.

## How can I prevent getting or spreading influenza?

- **You cannot get influenza from the influenza vaccine ('the flu shot').**
- Get immunized **every year** to protect yourself and those around you.
- Stay home when you feel sick.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer gel to clean your hands if soap and water are unavailable.
- Cough and sneeze into your sleeve or a tissue (throw tissue away after use and wash your hands).
- Clean and disinfect all surfaces regularly.

## Who can get Fluzone<sup>®</sup> High Dose vaccine for free?

Long-term care facility residents who are 65 years of age and older.

## How soon will I be protected after getting Fluzone<sup>®</sup> High Dose vaccine?

Protection (antibodies) develops within 2-3 weeks after immunization in most healthy seniors. However, this depends on the age and the immune response of the person being immunized, and the match between the vaccine viral strains and the influenza viral strains circulating in the community.

## Who should not get this vaccine?

- Persons who have a serious illness, with or without a fever, should delay immunization. **A mild illness, with or without a fever, is not a reason to avoid immunization.**
- People who had a life-threatening reaction to a previous dose of any influenza vaccine, or any components of the vaccine.
- People who developed a neurological disorder called Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) within 6 weeks of a previous influenza immunization.

## What are common reactions to the vaccine?

- **Vaccines are very safe. It is much safer to get the vaccine than to get influenza illness.**
- Temporary soreness, warmth, redness and swelling at the injection site and/or limited movement of the immunized arm or leg.
- Headache, muscle aches, fever, chills, fatigue, joint pain, irritability, sweating and/or loss of appetite.
- Sore, red or itchy eyes, a cough, and/or skin itching and throat hoarseness.
- Oculorespiratory syndrome (ORS) has been reported in past influenza seasons. Tell your public health nurse, physician or nurse practitioner if you have experienced red eyes, respiratory problems (difficulty breathing, cough, wheeze, chest tightness, sore throat) and/or facial swelling following a previous influenza vaccine.
- The background rate of GBS from any cause (**including influenza disease**) is 1-2 cases per 100,000 persons/ year (which means about 10-20 cases per million people/year). Investigations have shown either no risk or a very small attributable risk of GBS in roughly 1 case per million doses /year from influenza vaccine.

Those immunized should be monitored for 15 minutes after getting any vaccine because there is an extremely rare possibility of a life-threatening allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. This may include hives, difficulty breathing, or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips. **If this happens after you leave the clinic, call 911 or the local emergency number.** This reaction can be treated, and occurs in less than one in one million people who get the vaccine.

## Who should you report reactions to?

- Report any adverse or unexpected reactions to your local public health nurse, your doctor, or nurse practitioner as soon as possible.

## Talk to a public health nurse:

- If you have questions or concerns about your or your child's reaction to an immunization.
- If you had to take your child to a doctor, a hospital or to a health centre with a symptom that might be related to immunization.
- **For more information, contact your local public health office, your physician, nurse practitioner, HealthLine online or by calling 811.**

### **What does Fluzone High Dose vaccine contain?**

**NOTE:** This vaccine cannot cause influenza because it does not contain any live influenza viruses.

**FLUZONE® High Dose** contains 2 influenza A strains and 1 B viral strain, formaldehyde, sodium phosphate-buffered isotonic sodium chloride solution, and Triton® X-100. It may contain traces of egg protein and sucrose. This vaccine does not contain thimerosal, latex, antibiotics or gelatin.

**Reference:** FLUZONE® High Dose 2018 product monograph.