

Fluad[®] Influenza Vaccine Fact Sheet for Residents of Ontario's Long-Term Care Homes (LTCHs) – 2011/2012

This fact sheet provides basic information only. It must not take the place of medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always talk to a health care professional about any health concerns you have, and before you make any changes to your diet, lifestyle or treatment.

1. What is influenza?

Influenza (commonly known as “the flu”) is a serious, acute respiratory illness that is caused by a virus. People who get influenza may have a fever, chills, cough, runny eyes, stuffy nose, sore throat, headache, muscle aches, extreme weakness and fatigue. Note: the elderly may not have a fever. Children can also have earaches, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

People of any age can get influenza. Illness due to influenza usually lasts two to seven days; sometimes longer in the elderly and in people with chronic diseases. Most people who get influenza are ill for only a few days. However, the cough and fatigue can persist for several weeks, making the return to full activity, difficult. Some people can become very ill, possibly developing complications and requiring hospitalization.

Influenza spreads through respiratory droplets from infected persons, for example, through coughing or sneezing. It is also spread through direct contact with surfaces contaminated by the influenza virus, such as toys, eating utensils and unwashed hands.

2. What is Fluad[®] vaccine?

Fluad[®] is an adjuvanted influenza vaccine that is targeted to persons over the age of 65 who generally have a lower immune response and/or underlying health problems. In Ontario Fluad[®] is publicly funded for residents of Long-Term Care Homes (LTCHs) aged 65 years and older.

3. What is an adjuvant?

An adjuvant is something added to a vaccine that helps the recipient's body develop good protection (improved immune response) against infection. The adjuvant in Fluad[®] is an oil-in-water mixture.

4. How is Fluad[®] vaccine made?

Fluad[®] is made exactly like the seasonal influenza vaccine that is produced each year, except for the addition of the helper “adjuvant.”

5. How well does Fluad[®] vaccine protect against influenza?

When there is a good match between the influenza strains in the vaccine and the influenza strains circulating in the community, the Fluad[®] vaccine can

prevent influenza illness by about 50% in elderly populations.

Adjuvanted influenza vaccines have been shown to reduce hospitalization rates among elderly populations during peak influenza season. One study demonstrated that influenza vaccination with adjuvanted vaccine reduced the incidence of pneumonia-related hospitalizations in immunized persons by nearly half in comparison to unvaccinated persons.

According to the product monograph when compared to other influenza vaccines (without adjuvant) that are provided to elderly persons, Flud[®] produces a higher immune response.

In addition the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) states that getting the influenza vaccine reduces physician visits, hospitalization and death in high-risk persons under 65 years of age are also reduced.

It takes about two weeks after the immunization to develop protection against influenza; protection may last up to one year. People who receive the vaccine can still get influenza but if they do, it is usually milder. However, the vaccine will not protect against colds and other respiratory illnesses that may be mistaken for influenza, but are not caused by the influenza virus.

6. Can the Flud[®] vaccine cause influenza?

No. The Flud[®] vaccine does not contain the live virus so you cannot get influenza from the vaccine.

7. When should Flud[®] be given?

It is preferable to receive influenza vaccine prior to the onset of the influenza season if possible (during the month of October is recommended). Influenza vaccine should be offered as soon as it becomes available at the local public health unit.

8. Who can get the Flud[®] influenza vaccine?

In Ontario residents of LTCHs who are 65 years of age or older are eligible to receive the Flud[®] vaccine.

9. Do I need to receive the influenza vaccine every year?

Because the influenza virus changes often, it is necessary to get immunized every year for protection from the new virus strains that may be circulating that year.

10. How many doses of Flud[®] are needed?

LTCH residents aged 65 years and older should receive a single dose of Flud[®].

11. How is Flud[®] administered?

Flud[®] should be administered intramuscularly, preferably in the deltoid muscle of the upper arm.

12. Can Flud[®] vaccine be given at the same time as other vaccines?

Flud[®] may be given at the same time as other vaccines, but should not be mixed with any other vaccine in the same syringe. If given at the same time, it is recommended that two different injection sites be used. Different

administration sets (needle and syringe) must be used.

13. Do I have to pay for immunization with Flud[®] vaccine?

No. The Flud[®] vaccine is available **free of charge** to residents of Ontario LTCHs who are 65 years of age and older.

14. How can I keep track of my influenza immunizations and other immunizations?

After you receive your immunization, you should ask for a written record of your immunization from the doctor or nurse who administered your shot. Keep it in a safe place!

15. Who should not get Flud[®] vaccine?

The following persons should **not** get the Flud[®] influenza vaccine:

- Anyone under the age of 65 years should not get Flud[®] (Flud[®] vaccine is only recommended for individuals aged 65 years and older).
- Anyone who has a known allergy or hypersensitivity to any component of the vaccine. Your health care provider can tell you which components are in the specific vaccine.
- Anyone who had a serious allergic reaction to a previous dose of influenza vaccine.
- It is not known whether the Flud[®] vaccine causes an increased risk of recurrent Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) in persons who previously had GBS. Anyone who has previously developed GBS within the first 8 weeks following an influenza

immunization should avoid influenza immunization in the future.

Flud[®] should be temporarily delayed in the following persons:

- Anyone with a moderate to severe acute illness with fever or just started on medication (e.g., antibiotics) should usually wait until the symptoms subside before being immunized.
- However, people with a minor illness with or without a fever (e.g., a cold) could still get the influenza vaccine.
- Immunization should generally be **delayed** in individuals with an evolving neurologic disorder until the disease process has been stabilized.

16. What are the risks from the Flud[®] vaccine?

The Flud[®] vaccine, like any medicine, is capable of causing side effects which may be mild or, occasionally, severe. The risk of the vaccine causing serious harm is extremely small.

Most people who get the vaccine either have no side effects or mild side effects such as soreness, redness or swelling at the injection site. Life-threatening anaphylactic reactions are very rare. If they do occur, it is within a few minutes to a few hours after receiving the vaccine. If this type of reaction occurs, medical attention should be sought immediately.

Persons with hematologic disorders

As with all intramuscular injections, the administration of Flud[®] should be carefully considered in patients with clinically significant bleeding disorders.

Guillain-Barré Syndrome (or GBS)

GBS is a very uncommon disease that causes muscle paralysis and has been associated with certain infectious diseases (e.g. Campylobacter bacteria). Overall, the risk of GBS occurring in association with immunization is small. In comparison to the small risk of GBS, the risk of illness and death associated with influenza is much greater. In fact, influenza infection itself can cause GBS, and at least one study has found that influenza vaccination reduces the overall risk of GBS.

Oculorespiratory Syndrome (ORS)

During the 2000-2001 influenza season, “Oculo-Respiratory Syndrome” (ORS) was reported after administration of the influenza vaccine in some individuals. Symptoms include redness in both eyes that are not itchy, and/or swelling of the face, and/or respiratory symptoms (cough, wheeze, chest tightness, difficulty breathing, difficulty swallowing, hoarseness or sore throat) occurring **within 24 hours** of influenza immunization. Since the 2000-2001 influenza season, fewer cases of ORS have been reported.

Persons who experienced ORS symptoms in the past may be safely re-immunized with influenza vaccine except for those who have experienced ORS with severe lower respiratory symptoms (wheeze, chest tightness, difficulty breathing) within 24 hours of influenza immunization. These individuals should seek expert medical advice before being immunized again with influenza vaccine.

17. When should I seek medical attention after immunization with Flud[®]?

You should seek medical attention if you believe that you or someone in your care has had a reaction to a vaccine. **Any reaction to a vaccine should be reported to your health care provider who will report these occurrences to your local public health unit.**

18. Who should I talk to if I have any questions about Flud[®] or any other vaccines?

If you are looking for general information about influenza, Flud[®] or any other influenza vaccine, the province’s Universal Influenza Immunization Program (UIIP), or the location of a clinic near you, please call: 1-877-844-1944 (TTY#1-800-387-5559) or visit website: www.ontario.ca/flu. If you have questions about the vaccine that are specific to your medical condition, you should ask your health care provider or call your local public health unit.

For additional information on influenza, please visit the following websites or call your local public health unit:

- a) [Universal Influenza Immunization Program](#)
- b) Public Health Agency of Canada site:
National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) Statement on Seasonal Trivalent Inactivated Influenza Vaccine for 2010/2011
- c) [Canadian Coalition for Influenza Immunization Awareness and Promotion](#)
- d) [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\) Influenza: Prevention and Control Home Page](#)
- e) Product Monograph. Flud. Novartis Vaccines and Diagnostics Inc.
- f) Dielman J, et al. BJM 2011;343:1-13.
- g) Sivadon-Tardy V, et al. Clin Infect Dis 2009;48:48-56.
- h) Puig-Barbera, J., Diez-Domingo, J., Varea, A, B, et al. Vaccine 2007; 25(42), pp. 7313 – 7321.
- i) Puig-Barbera, J., Diez-Domingo, J., Perez, Hoyos, S., Belenguer Varea, A., Gonzalez Vidal, D. Vaccine, 2004. 23(3), pp. 283 – 289.

ServiceOntario, INFOline: 1-877-234-4343 toll free in Ontario (TTY: 1-800-387-5559)

Telehealth Ontario: 1-866-797-0000 (TTY: 1-866-797-0007)

Version française disponible en communiquant avec le 1 877 234-4343 ATS: 1 800 387-5559 (web site: <http://www.health.gov.on.ca/fr/ccom/flu/>)