Health PEI

Fact Sheet:

Influenza Vaccine - Live Attenuated (LAIV) (Quadrivalent intranasal vaccine)

1. What is influenza?

Influenza is a contagious viral respiratory infection caused primarily by influenza A and B viruses . Symptoms typically include the sudden onset of fever, cough, muscle and joint pain. Other common symptoms include headache, chills, loss of appetite, fatigue, and sore throat. Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea may also occur, especially in children. About 10-20% of Canadians are infected with influenza each year. Infection due to influenza virus can lead to health complications, the most common being pneumonia. Most people will recover within a week to 10 days, but some people are at greater risk of severe complications, such as pneumonia. Influenza infection can also worsen certain chronic conditions, such as heart disease lung disease, kidney disease and diabetes. Approximately 3,500 deaths occur annually in Canada due to influenza related illness and complications.

2. Who is recommended to receive the influenza vaccine?

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) recommends influenza vaccine for all Canadians over 6 months of age, with particular emphasis on the following groups:

- people with health conditions, such as: cancer and other immune compromising conditions, diabetes, heart disease, lung disease, obesity, kidney disease, neurologic or neurodevelopment conditions, anemia or hemoglobinopathy
- children 6 months to 18 years of age undergoing treatment for long periods with acetylsalicylic acid (ASA)
- people 65 years and older
- people who live in nursing homes or other long-term care facilities
- children under 5 years of age
- individuals who are pregnant or those planning to become pregnant
- Indigenous peoples
- People who can pass along the flu virus to those at high risk: care givers, health care providers, childcare providers, family and other household members.

The protection against influenza strains in the vaccine is obtained within 2-3 weeks after immunization and lasts for 6-12 months.

3. What is the live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV)?

LAIV is a vaccine administered by intranasal spray. It is an influenza vaccine option for **healthy children aged 2-17 years on PEI**.

4. What are the contents of LAIV?

LAIV is a live influenza vaccine containing four strains (two A strains and two B strains) of weakened influenza virus, which are recommended annually for seasonal protection. Traces of non-medicinal ingredients are present to keep the product sterile and stable. The packaging does not contain latex. The full list of contents of the vaccine is available in the product monograph which can be obtained from your health care provider.

5. What are the possible reactions to the LAIV?

Intranasal influenza vaccine contains weakened influenza viruses and may cause mild influenza symptoms but these are much milder than those due to influenza infection and last 1-2 days. Symptoms may include a runny or stuffy nose, cough, sore throat and fever. Other symptoms can include: headache, decreased appetite, weakness, muscle soreness, chills, vomiting, stomach ache and irritability.

Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) can relieve these symptoms. If symptoms persist for an extended period of time, contact your health care provider for an assessment.

In very rare instances a serious allergic reaction can occur requiring medical intervention from a health care provider. Your health care provider is able to quickly respond to this allergic reaction by administering adrenaline. This type of reaction mostly occurs within 15 minutes of receiving the vaccine. **You will be asked to remain in the waiting room for 15 minutes after receiving LAIV**.

6. What are the situations in which LAIV should <u>not</u> be given?

Contraindications to receiving LAIV include:

- children less than 2 years of age.
- those with a history of anaphylaxis to a previous dose or to any ingredient contained in the vaccine with the exception of egg. Egg allergy is not a contraindication for influenza vaccination.
- history of Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) within 6 weeks of a previous influenza immunization.
- Children 2-17 who are currently receiving aspirin therapy or aspirin-containing therapy. They may receive the inactivated influenza vaccine.
- pregnant individuals.
- those with severe asthma who 1) are on oral or high dose inhaled glucocorticosteroids, 2) are actively wheezing, or 3) required a medical visit in the previous 7 days due to asthma symptoms.
- LAIV can be used in those with stable non-severe asthma.
- those with reduced immunity due to illness and/or therapy. It can be used in children with chronic health conditions except those mentioned above.
- individuals who will have contact with anyone who has a very weak immune system, such as a bone marrow transplant patient, within 2 weeks of being immunized should not receive LAIV. They may receive the inactivated influenza vaccine.

  Precautions when administering LAIV :
  - those with serious acute febrile illness or nasal congestion should return when symptoms are settled.
  - those who have had antiviral medication against influenza within 48 hours before the vaccine is due to be given. Patients should not receive antiviral medication for 2 weeks after the vaccine has been received.

7. What are the risks if influenza vaccine is not received?

The risk of contracting influenza illness and of spreading it to others is increased when influenza vaccine is not received. Transmission of influenza illness contributes to increased hospitalization and prolonged illness particularly to those who are more vulnerable.