Fall Respiratory Illness

Influenza & COVID-19 Vaccines

Staying up to date with vaccinations continues to be the best defense against COVID-19 and the flu and everyone is encouraged, especially those with an increased risk of severe infection, to get their COVID-19 and flu vaccines in the fall. It is safe and convenient to receive both the COVID-19 and flu shots at the same time.

What is Influenza?

Influenza is a respiratory illness caused by the influenza A and B viruses in humans and can cause mild to severe illness, including hospitalization or death. It is also called the "flu". Influenza lasts 2-7 days, sometimes longer in the elderly and those with health problems. Cough and fatigue symptoms can linger for weeks. More than 12,000 Canadians are sent to hospital with influenza every year. In Canada annually, there are about 3,500 influenza-related deaths (NACI, 2023).

What is COVID-19?

Novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). COVID-19 symptoms can begin anywhere from 1-14 days after exposure, but typically appear 3-7 days after exposure. Some people who become infected may experience long-term symptoms, even after they recover from their initial infection. Hospitalization and deaths resulting from COVID-19 are still of concern and can occur even in healthy individuals (NACI, 2023).

How are Influenza & COVID-19 spread?

Both the flu and COVID-19 are spread through coughing, sneezing, talking, and through direct or indirect contact with respiratory secretions, such as touching infected surfaces or objects like unwashed hands, toys and eating utensils.

The virus causing COVID-19 is generally more contagious than influenza viruses and has more superspreading events; it spreads easily and quickly to a lot of people resulting in continual spread amongst the population as time progresses (CDC, 2023).

Who is at increased risk of developing COVID-19 or Influenza infection or severe disease?

- Residents of long-term care homes and other congregate living settings
- Adults 65 years of age or older
- Children 6 months to 4 years of age (influenza)
- Pregnant individuals
- Individuals in or from First Nations, Metis and Inuit communities
- Individuals with underlying health conditions
- Members of racialized and other equity deserving communities
- Health care workers and those providing essential community services

Who SHOULD get Influenza & COVID-19 shot?

Everyone 6 months of age and older can benefit from these vaccines.

Lambton
Public Health

160 Exmouth Street
Point Edward, ON N7T 7Z6
Telephone: 519-383-8331
Toll free: 1-800-667-1839
www.lambtonpublichealth.ca

Page **1** of 2

Who should NOT get Influenza & COVID-19 shot?
- Children under 6 months of age
- Anyone who had a serious reaction to a previous dose of these vaccines
- People with a severe allergy to any component of the vaccine (except eggs)
- Anyone who developed Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) within 6 weeks of a past vaccine
- Anyone with moderate to severe acute illness with fever should wait until symptoms pass (Government of Ontario, 2023)

Will the vaccines give me the virus and make me sick?
No. The influenza and COVID-19 vaccines do not contain a live virus, so you cannot get these viruses from the vaccines.

What to expect after vaccination:
- Soreness, redness or swelling at the spot where you got the injection.
- Low-grade fever, muscle aches or headache

Serious reactions are rare and usually happen within minutes to a few hours after receiving the vaccine. Seek medical attention (call 911 or visit the emergency department) if you experience any of the following:

- Hives or an itchy rash
- Swelling of the mouth or throat
- Trouble breathing, hoarseness or wheezing
- Pale skin colour, weakness, fast heartbeat, or dizziness

If you have an unusual reaction, call your health-care provider, and report it to Lambton Public Health at 519-383-8331 or toll free 1-800-667-1839.

Avoid receiving a TB skin test until at least 28 days after receiving a dose of COVID-19 vaccine.

How do I obtain my vaccination receipt?
You can download your vaccine certificate from Ontario's vaccination portal at:
https://www.ontario.ca/get-proof/

If you do not have a computer or need help, call the **Provincial Vaccine Contact Centre at 1-833-943-3900** to request a copy of your vaccine certificate by email or mail. Residents may also download/print their receipts at Lambton County Libraries, free of charge.

More Questions? To speak with a nurse call 519-383-8331 or toll free 1-800-667-1839 or visit www.GetTheVaccine.ca.

Additional Resources:
https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-vaccines

https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/covid19-industry/drugs-vaccines-treatments/vaccines.html