

# Updates on Influenza and Pneumococcal Pneumonia Immunization and Ministry of Health Guidance for Immunization Services

## Update to York Region health care providers as of August 28, 2020

Health care providers in York Region are being notified of the following updated information regarding:

1. Influenza Immunization and Prevention Planning:
  - Update #1 – York Region Public Health will continue to provide influenza updates going forward
2. Pneumococcal Pneumonia Vaccination Reminder
3. Ministry of Health [Guidance for Immunization Services During COVID-19](#)

### Influenza Immunization and Prevention Planning – Update #1 for 2020/21 Influenza Season

This year, influenza immunization and prevention plans will look a little different while the COVID-19 pandemic continues to be a focal point. Increasing access to and uptake of influenza vaccine will be especially important this year to help prevent against influenza infection among our populations and reduce the influenza-related illness burden on our health care system.

When preparing for influenza season each year, health care providers and health organizations in the Northern hemisphere typically look to the recent influenza season in the Southern hemisphere for what to expect. This year, Australia saw a dramatic increase in uptake for influenza vaccine (approximately 50-60% uptake). At the same time, ongoing COVID-19 public health measures have been in place (e.g., increased hand washing, physical distancing, wearing of masks), similar to measures in place in York Region. As a result, Australia has seen a significant decline in influenza cases compared to the year before.

We expect an increase in demand for influenza vaccine this year in Ontario, as people seek to reduce the burden of influenza-related illness given the potential of a second-wave of COVID-19. Federally and provincially, ministries have advocated for increased influenza vaccine doses this year to meet anticipated demand. Locally, York Region Public Health has requested an increase to our influenza vaccine allocation and we anticipate more information from the ministry soon. Administering vaccines will pose new challenges this season, as we continue to employ measures to limit potential transmission of COVID-19. This year may require health care providers to think differently and use innovative approaches to immunizing their patient populations.

York Region Public Health works with health care providers in York Region to distribute influenza vaccine and provides trusted guidance on immunization for health care professionals. Influenza vaccination should be offered to all eligible patients who are 6 months of age and older this fall. In particular, health care workers, essential workers and vulnerable and high-risk groups should receive the influenza vaccine early in the season, ideally. The distribution of influenza vaccine doses is expected to begin in late September for vulnerable and /or high-risk groups and continue to across the province in early October when additional doses start to be received from manufacturers. Vulnerable and high-risk groups include:

- Individuals at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19 and those at high risk for influenza complications, including residents of long-term care homes, retirement homes, and other chronic care and congregate facilities, and those 65 years of age and older.

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**Details and additional information regarding Ontario's Universal Influenza Immunization Program (UIIP) will be communicated as the flu season approaches.**

**York Region Public Health is available to consult to increase immunization uptake**

Health care providers interested in engaging with York Region Public Health to consult on community flu shot clinic plans or are looking for guidance on their own flu shot clinics can contact York Region Public Health via email at [vaccineinformationline@york.ca](mailto:vaccineinformationline@york.ca). To assist in your preparations, we have also created an influenza immunization clinic planning checklist for health care providers (included with this message and posted online at [york.ca/healthprofessionals](http://york.ca/healthprofessionals)). York Region Public Health would be pleased to consult with health care providers to help increase access and number of individuals vaccinated for influenza this year.

Applications have been received for the 2020/21 Universal Influenza Immunization Program. If you haven't already, make sure your vaccine storage and handling procedures and equipment are ready for your [annual cold chain inspection](#).

**Pneumococcal Pneumonia Vaccination Reminder**

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is of paramount importance that we continue to encourage education around and protection against vaccine preventable diseases. A [Joint Statement](#) by the World Coalition on Adult Vaccination was released on August 26, 2020 to direct attention to the importance of the pneumococcal pneumonia vaccine this season. Pneumococcal pneumonia vaccine is available to help prevent pneumonia among at risk-groups, which can have a significant effect. The above statement cites that about 90% of deaths from an infectious illness are reported as being linked to pneumonia in populations aged 65 and older. With influenza season approaching, co-infection with influenza and pneumonia can lead to worse outcomes and increased hospitalization rates.

Health care providers are encouraged to review immunization requirements and opportunities with their patients of all ages. Individuals should be reminded of the importance of immunizations across the lifespan. Review your adult patients' immunization history to ensure it is current for all relevant vaccines, based on their age and health status needs by referring to the [Publicly Funded Immunization Schedules for Ontario](#). For individuals aged 65 and older, this can include, but is not limited to: pneumococcal vaccine, influenza, shingles, pertussis and tetanus. Please feel free to contact York Region Public Health with any questions or inquiries regarding immunization requirements at [vaccineinformationline@york.ca](mailto:vaccineinformationline@york.ca).

**Ministry of Health Guidance for Immunization Services During COVID-19**

This [guidance document](#) was released by the Ministry of Health on August 25, 2020 with the intended audience of primary care providers in a community setting; however it can also be used by other immunization service providers for general immunization guidance. The guidance on immunizing during COVID-19 includes helpful information on the following content areas:

- General Advice
- Planning Considerations
- Infection Prevention and Control
- Screening
- Providing Immunization Services
- Groups Requiring Immunization
- Provision of Catch-Up Vaccines for Missed Doses
- General Timing of Vaccine Administration
- Vaccine Eligibility – Missed Doses

In addition to this guidance, York Region Public Health has also included a [planning checklist](#) for use by health care providers when planning immunization clinics at their premises.

**For more information**

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact York Region Public Health at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 73452 or via email at [vaccineinformationline@york.ca](mailto:vaccineinformationline@york.ca).

# INFLUENZA CLINIC PLANNING CHECKLIST

This checklist below is designed to assist our community health care providers with the planning and implementation of influenza immunization clinics and can also be used for other types of vaccination clinics. Some items on the checklist will be relevant to larger clinics only. The list is not meant to be all inclusive. The checklist should be completed during the planning stages of the clinic. If, after completing the checklist below, you would like to consult with public health on the planning related to your influenza immunization clinic for the 2020/21 influenza season, email: [vaccineinformationline@york.ca](mailto:vaccineinformationline@york.ca) with a copy of your completed checklist.

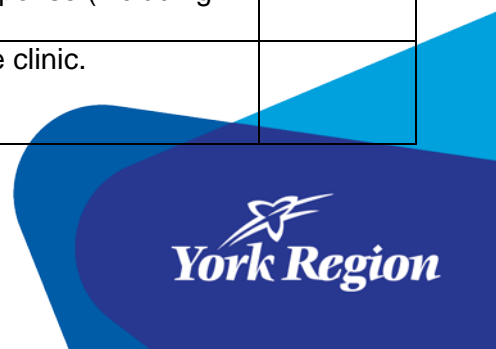
This checklist reviews clinic planning considerations across a number of topics including:

- Staffing and training
- Clinic venue
- Clinic logistics
- Vaccine storage and handling
- Clinic supplies
- Waste management and infection control
- Vaccine administration
- Documentation

Yes	No	N/A	Planning Checklist	Staff Initials
<b>STAFFING AND TRAINING</b>				
			A staff member is assigned to be in charge of overseeing clinic operations. This role is typically assigned to a physician or registered nurse with vaccination clinic experience	
			Appropriate health care professionals such as nurses (RN/RPN) or physicians are selected to administer the vaccine	
			An appropriate staff member is assigned to screen clinic clients for acute respiratory illness and check them in upon arrival All immunizing staff have a current and valid certification in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)	
			All immunizing staff have a current and valid certification in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)	
			Designate an appropriate staff member to oversee the post-immunization observation area and lead the response to any medical emergencies occurring in that area	
			A qualified individual is assigned to oversee infection prevention and control at the clinic.	
			All staff are aware of the location of emergency anaphylaxis kit.	
			Staff members administering vaccines have reviewed appropriate vaccine monograph(s) prior to the vaccination clinic.	
			Staff are trained as appropriate on important vaccine topics, including: infection control requirements, waste segregation and disposal, vaccine storage and handling, informed consent, pre-vaccine screening and assessment, vaccine landmarking and administration, anaphylaxis recognition and response (including how to administer epinephrine).	
			Staff are wearing appropriate identifying name badges during the clinic.	

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<b>CLINIC VENUE</b>				
			There is a designated area at the site for management of clients with urgent medical problems (e.g., fainting).	
			There is a separate entrance and exit to the clinic space.	
			There are sinks available in the clinic for staff handwashing.	
			Fully accessible washrooms available for staff and clients.	
			A private area is available for those who need to be immunized in a private space.	
			The venue is large enough to allow for unidirectional traffic flow and 2 metre physical distancing requirements.	
			There is a sufficient quantity of chairs and tables available for clinic use.	
			The venue is fully accessible to those with physical limitations.	
			The venue has sufficient parking and is accessible by public transportation.	
			There is an appropriate quantity and placement of electrical outlets.	
			There is a secure space available to store clinic supplies.	
			Internet access and cellular reception are verified.	
<b>CLINIC LOGISTICS</b>				
			The venue is booked for the clinic.	
			There is a plan for clients to book appointments for the clinic .	
			There is a plan in place to manage and direct client flow through the clinic space.	
			If the clinic is drop-in, there is a plan for how to limit the number of clients in the clinic at all times and to manage crowds so that physical distancing can be maintained.	
			A screening form is prepared.	
			A consent form is prepared and includes vaccine contraindications.	
			If health care providers, other than physicians, are administering vaccine and/or epinephrine, a medical directive specific to the vaccine and a separate medical directive for epinephrine administration are prepared and signed by the appropriate medical professional(s).	
			Plans are in place for communication with clients who are non-English speaking (e.g. use of telephone interpreter services, staff who speak multiple languages).	
			An anaphylaxis emergency kit is prepared, and includes all recommended supplies: <a href="#">See Canadian Immunization Guide, Part 2: Vaccine Safety</a> for recommended emergency kit contents.	
			The emergency anaphylaxis kit is on-site for the entire duration of the clinic and is placed in an area that is easily accessible to staff but not to young clients.	

Yes	No	N/A	Planning Checklist	Staff Initials
			There is a mechanism in place to report clinic incidents.	
<b>VACCINE STORAGE AND HANDLING</b>				
			Vaccines are stored and handled according to Ontario Vaccine Storage and Handling <a href="#">Guidelines</a> and <a href="#">Protocols</a> .	
			The amount of vaccine ordered and transported was limited to the amount needed for the clinic day.	
			Vaccines are transported and stored in appropriate storage equipment that maintains the vaccines between +2.0°C to +8.0°C temperature range (i.e., a portable vaccine refrigerator, active or passive hard sided vaccine cooler).	
			Vaccine temperature is being monitored and recorded throughout the clinic using a digital min/max thermometer or data logger.	
			Vaccines are being protected from light and excess humidity during the vaccination clinic, as per the manufacturer's package insert.	
			All vaccines were transported in the passenger compartment of the vehicle where environmental temperatures can be controlled (NOT in the vehicle trunk).	
			Upon arrival at the facility/clinic (either by shipment or transport), vaccines were immediately unpacked and placed in proper storage equipment	
			Upon arrival at the facility/clinic, vaccines were still within the manufacturer-recommended temperature range (i.e., between +2.0°C to +8.0°C for ALL refrigerated vaccines).	
			Upon arrival at the facility/clinic, expiration dates of vaccines and any medical equipment (syringes, needles, alcohol wipes) being used were checked, and they had not expired.	
			Vaccines are being prepared at the time of administration.	
			In the event of an adverse storage condition (ASC) (i.e., temperature departure below +2.0°C or above +8.0°C), the clinic lead are immediately informed for further action as needed. This will include contacting the York Region Public Health's Vaccine Inventory program at 1-877-464-9675, ext. 74033, Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.	
			If vaccines are deemed viable after an ASC, they are red-dotted and are to be used first regardless of expiry date.	
			If vaccines are deemed unviable after an ASC, they are quarantined and labelled "Do Not Use – ASC Wastage"	
			Vaccines are never transferred from one syringe to another	
			Multidose vials are being used only for the number of doses approved by the manufacturer.	
<b>CLINIC SUPPLIES</b>				
			Syringes (if not supplied in pre-filled syringes) and needles in a variety of lengths are available (5/8", 1", 1.5"). 25G x 1" needles are typically used for vaccine administration.	
			Adhesive strips	
			Alcohol swabs	
			Cotton balls	
			Optional: Instant ice packs (useful for clients with pre-syncope)	
			Emesis bags	
			Biohazardous sharps containers	
			Garbage bags for regular garbage	
			Lined biohazardous bins for disposal of full sharps containers and other biohazardous waste.	

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			Dental bibs or drapes for immunizing staff to create clean work surface	
			Hand sanitizer and medical grade disinfecting wipes	
			Fully stocked emergency kit	
			Screening forms and consent forms	
			Pens	
			Vaccine information sheets	
			Yoga style or gym mats for individuals who must be immunized lying down (e.g. history of fainting)	
			Personal protective equipment for staff (e.g. medical grade masks, gowns, gloves, face shields)	
			Clinic signage	
<b>WASTE MANAGEMENT AND INFECTION CONTROL</b>				
			A qualified individual has been designated to oversee infection control at the clinic.	
			Waste is appropriately segregated and disposed of	
			Appropriate personal protective equipment is provided to staff, including instructions on how to don, doff, and dispose of	
			Surfaces are disinfected according to provincial COVID-19 guidelines	
			Clients and staff are screened for COVID-19 prior to entering clinic space. Child screening <a href="#">tool</a> . Adult screening <a href="#">tool</a> .	
			Staff is using correct hygiene techniques to clean hands before vaccine administration, between clients, and anytime hands become soiled.	
			If gloves are being worn by staff administering vaccines, they are being changed and hands are being cleaned using correct hygiene techniques between each client.	
			Used needles and syringes are being immediately placed in a sharps container following administration. (Needles are NOT being recapped.)	
			All biohazardous material is disposed of appropriately	
			<a href="#">COVID related infection control guidelines</a> are adhered to.	
<b>VACCINE ADMINISTRATION</b>				
			Vaccine Information Statements (VISs) are offered to every client, parent, or guardian before vaccination.	
			All clients are screened for contraindications and precautions for the specific vaccine(s) in use before receiving that vaccine(s).	
			Informed consent is obtained from each client prior to vaccine administration.	
			Staff are following rights of medication administration.	
			A new needle and new syringe are being used for each injection. Needles and syringes should never be used to administer vaccine to more than one person.	
			Each staff member is administering only the vaccines they have prepared.	
			Vaccines are being administered using aseptic technique and following safe injection practices, as outlined in the <a href="#">Canadian Immunization Guide</a>	
			If vaccine administration errors are observed, corrective action is being taken immediately.	
			Any persons with a needlestick injury, a vaccine administration error, or an urgent medical problem are being evaluated immediately and referred for additional medical care if needed.	
			Clients are being encouraged to stay at the clinic for 15 minutes after vaccination to be monitored for adverse events.	

Yes	No	N/A	Planning Checklist	Staff Initials
<b>DOCUMENTATION</b>				
			Each vaccination is being fully documented with name and date of birth of person vaccinated; name of vaccine, dose, vaccination date and time; lot number, expiry date, route and site, consent, pre-immunization assessment and health teaching completed, and name and designation of staff member administering the vaccine	
			Vaccine administration is documented according to CNO or CPSO or other appropriate regulatory body requirements.	
			Any adverse events following immunization (AEFI) are reported to York Region Public Health using the <a href="#">appropriate reporting form</a>	
			All personal health information is placed in secured storage locations for privacy protection and is kept secure at all time according to PHIPA requirements	
			Clients are receiving documentation for their personal records and to share with their medical providers.	

Form Completed by (Full Name and designation): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date completed (yyyy/mm/dd): \_\_\_\_\_