

## BCCH 2021-22 FLU VACCINE – ONCOLOGY CLINIC

We are providing influenza vaccines for patients who are **on** therapy and have platelets > 50,000 and ANC over 0.5 (and expected to stay above 0.5 for the next 48 hours, in order to minimize risk of admission in case of fever). Please do not schedule appointments for flu shots only.

Please advise the family that immunization of all family members is recommended. The oncology clinic is **not** providing immunizations for family members or for those patients who are OFF therapy. Flu shots can be given by family doctors to patients and their families, or they can get a flu shot at the BCCH drop-in Family Immunization clinic in the Ambulatory Care Building, across from the Ambulatory Care Pharmacy on week days in the fall months. Pediatric oncology patients can also get a flu shot at almost any community pharmacy at no cost as they are considered “at risk.”

<b>Flulaval Tetra</b>		
<b>Age</b>	<b>Dose**</b>	<b>Doses required</b>
6 months – 8 years	0.5 mL IM	1 or 2*
≥9 years	0.5 mL IM	1
Less than 6 months	Not recommended	
*Two doses administered at least 4 weeks apart are recommended for children under 9 years of age who are receiving influenza vaccine for the first time.		
**The recommended site of vaccination is the deltoid muscle for adults and older children. The preferred site for infants and young children is the anterolateral aspect of the thigh.		

### Contraindications:

- Febrile illness
- Thimerosal sensitivity

### Special considerations:

- Egg allergic individuals (including those who have experienced anaphylaxis following egg ingestion) can be immunized with inactivated influenza vaccine (such as Flulaval tetra)
- Thimerosal allergic patients should be vaccinated using Fluzone which can be obtained from local public health units, (but **not** in the oncology clinic). Refer these patients to the Family Immunization Clinic at BCCH or their local public health unit.

Patients receiving chemotherapy should be advised that the vaccine may be ineffective because of chemotherapy-induced immune suppression and **patients should continue to take precautions against infection.**

### The Vaccine:

- **Flulaval Tetra** is a quadrivalent vaccine which contains thimerosal as a preservative
- Vials are multidose (10 doses per vial), stable for 28 days once punctured; label vial with expiry date when opening
- Shake vial well prior to withdrawing dose
- Kept in the fridge in the oncology clinic; reorder from pharmacy by asking oncology clinical pharmacist to obtain a re-supply (do not order on stock requisition)

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**Flumist Quadrivalent**, a live, attenuated intranasal vaccine is **contraindicated** in patients with immunocompromise and should NOT be administered to oncology patients or **anyone (including staff) in the oncology units (in-patient and out-patient)**. **Flumist Quadrivalent** is a live, attenuated vaccine and there is a 2 week period of viral shedding after administration. Patients' families should also **NOT** use Flumist unless they can remain isolated from the patient for 14 days.

Prepared October 6, 2021 by Jennifer Kendrick, pharmacist. Reviewed by Bjorn Baadjes; Ann Van Eyssen; Justine Behan

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