

## BCCH 2025-26 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”.

| Fluzone Trivalent  |                 |                |
|--|-----------------|----------------|
| Age  | Dose**          | Doses required |
| 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
- History of anaphylaxis to Fluzone Trivalent or any of its components

### Special considerations:

- Egg allergic individuals (including those who have experienced anaphylaxis following egg ingestion) can be immunized with inactivated influenza vaccine (such as Fluzone Trivalent)
- Receipt of a CTLA-4 inhibitor (e.g., ipilimumab). Patients may receive the flu vaccine during treatment as long as they are not experiencing severe immune-related adverse events

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:

- **Fluzone Trivalent** is a trivalent 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 Trivalent**, 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)**. There is a 2 week period of viral shedding after **Flumist Trivalent** administration. Patients' families should also **NOT** use Flumist unless they can remain isolated from the patient for 14 days.

Revised Sep 29, 2025 by Jennifer Kendrick, pharmacist. Reviewed by Dr Björn Baadjes, Debbie Dang

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