

Frequently Asked Questions for pharmacist’s administration of publicly funded influenza vaccine

Pharmacists participating in Ontario’s Universal Influenza Immunization Program receiving publicly funded influenza vaccine must be familiar with the [Vaccine Storage and Handling Guidelines](#).

For more information on:

- the Universal Influenza Immunization Program, please review the [ministry’s website](#) or contact UIIP.MOH@ontario.ca
- Health Network System claims issues, pharmacy staff may contact the ministry’s Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) Help Desk and refer to the [Ontario Drug Programs Reference Manual](#)
- resources including patient consent forms, patient questionnaires and permanent personal immunization records, pharmacists should contact the [Ontario Pharmacists Association](#)
- injection training and scope of practice, pharmacists should contact the [Ontario College of Pharmacists](#)

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Overview

1. What is the pharmacist's role in the administration of the publicly funded influenza vaccine to Ontarians?

Currently, pharmacists may administer the publicly funded influenza vaccine to eligible people five years of age and older who live, work, or go to school in Ontario in Universal Influenza Immunization Program (UIIP) approved pharmacies¹ in strict accordance with an approved UIIP User Agreement and Health Network System (HNS) Subscription Agreement with the government.

2. I thought that pharmacists could administer the influenza vaccine to Ontarians aged two and older. When will this be in effect?

Currently the age limitation for pharmacists to administer the influenza vaccine is aged 5 and older. While the government has announced a desire to allow pharmacists to administer the flu vaccine to children as young as 2 years of age, the Ontario College of Pharmacists will need to make a regulation to allow this to occur. The College's proposal is currently under review by the ministry.

3. What are the publicly funded influenza vaccines that are available to pharmacies?

The names and drug identification numbers (DIN) of the publicly funded injectable influenza vaccines are listed on the Executive Officer Notice that is published in October at the start of each influenza season. These are the vaccines that UIIP approved pharmacies can order² at no cost and administer to eligible Ontarians for that specific season, at no cost to patients.

4. Which influenza vaccine should an individual age 65 years and older receive?

Individuals aged 65 years and older are eligible to receive a quadrivalent vaccine or the Fluzone® High-Dose trivalent vaccine. Given the options available for vaccination for those age 65 years and older, it is important to discuss the specifics of each available vaccine to assist the individual in their decision making. Please refer to *the Health Care Provider Qs & As: Information for Individuals ≥65 years of age* fact sheet on the [ministry website](#).

¹ A publicly funded influenza vaccine may be administered off-site in compliance with requirement 20 of the User Agreement

² Inclusion of a product in the list of publicly-funded vaccines available for pharmacies to order does not guarantee supply of the product through the Ontario Government Pharmaceutical and Medical Supply Service (OGPMSS) or participating pharmaceutical wholesalers, which ever may apply.

5. How will the public know which pharmacies in Ontario are providing publicly funded influenza vaccines?

Pharmacies continue to self-promote that they provide the influenza vaccine (flu shot) through radio, television and on-line advertisements as well as in-store signage.

6. How do government approved pharmacies obtain the publicly funded vaccines?

All UIIP approved pharmacies will order publicly funded influenza vaccines (at no cost) through McKesson or Shoppers Drug Mart. The pharmaceutical wholesaler will be assigned by the ministry.

7. Are pharmacists authorized to administer non-publicly funded influenza vaccines?

To receive payment from the ministry, pharmacist can only administer publicly funded influenza vaccines according to the UIIP agreement. For questions on whether a pharmacist has the authority beyond the UIIP parameters, please contact the [Ontario College of Pharmacists](#).

Eligibility

8. Are all individuals eligible for the publicly funded influenza immunization administered by pharmacists?

No. Pharmacists can only administer the publicly funded influenza immunization by injection to people five years of age and older who live, work, or study in Ontario. Many of the vaccines have age parameters for administration.

9. Are patients required to provide consent before pharmacists administer the flu immunization?

Yes. Completion of a consent form is required by the patient or the patient's authorized representative or substitute decision maker prior to administering the influenza immunization.

To obtain a consent form, pharmacists may contact the [Ontario Pharmacists Association](#).

10. Can a person who does not have an Ontario health number³ still receive the publicly funded influenza vaccine at a pharmacy?

Yes. A pharmacist can administer the publicly funded influenza vaccine to someone without an Ontario health number provided they are at least 5 years old and have valid documentation that they live, work, or study in Ontario. However, if the patient does not have an Ontario health number, the pharmacist will not be paid any administration fee for these doses nor will the patient be charged.

Alternatively, pharmacists may direct patients without an Ontario health number to the local [public health unit](#) for the influenza vaccine.

If a pharmacist does administer the vaccine to a patient without an Ontario health number, the pharmacist must complete the [required form](#), and submit it to the ministry for tracking purposes. No fee can be collected from the patient. For more information, please email UIIP.MOH@ontario.ca

11. Can a patient be an ODB recipient and not have an Ontario Health Card?

Yes. There may be circumstances when a patient who is an eligible ODB recipient is issued a temporary health number by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services that is used until the official Health Card is issued or is not eligible for an Ontario Health number but has a paper Drug Benefit Eligibility Card. If such a patient is age 5 and over and is requesting a flu shot, the pharmacist will use the temporary health number or eligibility number to submit the claim for payment through the HNS.

12. Can a pharmacist still submit a claim for payment for the administration of the influenza vaccine if a patient forgot to bring his/her Ontario health number?

The pharmacist needs the patient's Ontario health number in order to submit the claim for payment through the HNS.

Ministry Payment

13. How much does the ministry pay pharmacists to administer the influenza vaccine?

The ministry pays pharmacists \$7.50 for the costs associated with administering an injectable publicly funded influenza vaccine, when a claim for the vaccine is submitted through the HNS.

³In these Frequently Asked Questions, Ontario health number means Ontario Health Card Number or Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) eligibility number issued by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services for some ODB eligible recipients.

Pharmacies will not receive payment under the UIIP if administering a non-publicly funded influenza vaccine. (i.e., an influenza vaccine that is not listed on the annual ministry notice and shipped to the pharmacy as per the UIIP).

14. How much does the ministry pay a pharmacist if they are required to inject epinephrine as emergency treatment for patients experiencing a serious adverse drug reaction due to the publicly funded influenza vaccine?

The ministry will reimburse pharmacies the acquisition cost (no mark-up, dispensing or service fee) of approved epinephrine auto-injection products up to the total amount reimbursed (i.e., see Table 2 of the ministry Notice) when used in this circumstance for a patient with a valid Ontario health number.

Pharmacists may only submit claims for payment using the ministry's HNS for epinephrine auto-injection of individuals with a valid Ontario health number.

15. Does the ministry pay the pharmacist directly or the pharmacy?

For pharmacies who hold a UIIP User Agreement with the ministry, payment is paid through the ministry's HNS to the accredited pharmacy.

Pharmacist Training

16. Are all Ontario pharmacists able to administer the influenza vaccines to eligible Ontarians?

Only trained pharmacists registered with the Ontario College of Pharmacists as having completed an approved training program can administer the publicly funded influenza vaccine by injection. The injection-trained pharmacists are listed on the Ontario College of Pharmacists member registry website.

For more information on pharmacist's training please contact the [Ontario College of Pharmacists](#).

Pharmacy Participation

17. Will all Ontario pharmacies provide the publicly funded influenza vaccine?

No. Only pharmacies approved by the ministry via a [Universal Influenza Immunization Program User Agreement](#) and HNS Subscription Agreement can provide the publicly funded influenza vaccine to the public.

For more information, please refer to the [ministry's website](#) or email UIIP.MOH@ontario.ca

18. How does a pharmacy get approved to administer the influenza vaccine in Ontario?

To get approved, pharmacy managers must complete the ministry's [User Agreement for Pharmacies Requesting Publicly Funded Influenza Vaccine](#) each year.

For more information on the User Agreement, please email the ministry at UIIP.MOH@ontario.ca

19. What are the User Agreement requirements?

Some of the pharmacy requirements under the User Agreement include:

- Having at least one trained pharmacist on staff to administer the influenza vaccine
- Meeting Ontario's [Vaccine Storage and Handling Guidelines](#) and
- Having an approved cold chain inspection of the pharmacy refrigerator by the local public health unit.

For complete information on pharmacy requirements under the User Agreement, please review the information on the [ministry's website](#) or email UIIP.MOH@ontario.ca

20. What type of personal protective equipment (PPE) do pharmacists need in order to administer the influenza vaccine?

Resources and guidance for PPE can be found on the [Ontario College of Pharmacists](#) website.

21. Is PPE available for pharmacies that administer the flu vaccines?

Yes. The ministry has a dedicated supply of PPE that is available during the 2020/21 influenza season for pharmacies that have a UIIP agreement.

Note that there is an allocation framework in place depending on the current supply and not all orders for PPE may be filled. The ministry's supply of PPE should ONLY be used to support the activity of pharmacies administering the flu vaccine.

22. How do I access the ministry supply of PPE to support the administration of the influenza vaccine through UIIP?

Pharmacies may order PPE by accessing the Remedy online intake form at this link: <https://ehealthontario.on.ca/en/health-care-professionals/ppe-intake?a=ppe-intake>

Pharmacies that belong to a banner or chain corporation should work through their corporate head office, who may centrally coordinate order and facilitate distribution.

Independent pharmacies may order directly from the website.

23. What other procedures must be followed during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Pharmacy professionals should continue to follow the guidelines set out by public health officials. Pharmacies have a shared responsibility for informing and educating the public on COVID-19, including promoting infection control and preventative measures. Resources can be found on the [Ontario College of Pharmacists](#) website.

Documentation Guidelines

24. What are pharmacists required to document when providing the influenza immunization vaccine to eligible patients?

In accordance with the UIIP requirements and the *Pharmacy Act, 1991*, the pharmacist must keep a record of every dose of publicly funded influenza vaccine administered and must:

- Document the name, strength/dose (where applicable), quantity and lot# of the publicly funded influenza vaccine administered
- Document the time, date and location that the vaccine was administered
- Document the name and address of the patient
- Ensure the consent form is signed and dated by the patient or the patient's authorized representative or substitute decision maker, as applicable
- Document the name, pharmacy address and signature of the trained pharmacist who administered the vaccine
- Provide a written record of the influenza immunization to the patient

Record any serious adverse events following immunization that may or may not result in the administration of epinephrine, and the circumstances relating to the administration of the substance. Pharmacists must also meet the Ontario College of Pharmacists' policies and guidelines, such as the College's [Record Retention, Disclosure and Disposal Guidelines](#) and [Documentation Guidelines](#).

Please refer to question 32 and 33 regarding reporting requirements for adverse events following immunization.

Please note that pharmacists must enter the patient's date of birth and Ontario health number into the pharmacy's HNS. Failure to do so will affect future claims transaction for non-Ontario Drug Benefit recipients. In addition, by identifying the

date of birth, pharmacists can align the appropriate vaccine to the patient's age group.

Documentation forms are not standardized; however, the Ontario Pharmacists Association provides a comprehensive form that may assist pharmacies with their record keeping obligations under the UIIP. Refer to the Ontario Pharmacists Association [Influenza Immunization Resources](#).

25. How long must I keep the influenza immunization and/or an epinephrine auto-injector administration record on file?

As for any HNS claim, pharmacies must keep a record of the required documentation. All pharmacy documentation records relating to the administration of the influenza vaccine claim (and epinephrine auto-injector, if applicable) are part of the patient's medication record and must be maintained in a readily retrievable format for the appropriate record retention period of at least 10 years from the last recorded professional pharmacy service provided to the patient, or until 10 years after the day on which the patient reached, or would have reached, the age of 18 years, whichever is longer.

In addition, pharmacists are expected to review and adhere to the Ontario College of Pharmacists [Record Retention, Disclosure and Disposal Guidelines](#).

26. What will happen if I forget to document or misplace the documentation?

If there is no documentation, incorrect or incomplete documentation, the administration fee that is claimed is subject to recovery by the ministry. Documentation is also important in the event of an adverse reaction following an immunization or if a patient follows up with the pharmacy for their influenza vaccine record.

27. What documentation must pharmacists provide to the patient after administration of the flu vaccine?

To help patients keep track of their influenza vaccine, pharmacists must provide a written record (i.e., electronic or paper based) of the influenza immunization product administered, including the date.

This can be accommodated by providing the patient with a permanent personal immunization record. Patients should keep this record in a safe place, and it should also be readily available on file at the pharmacy.

For more information on forms, pharmacists can refer to the Ontario Pharmacists Association [Influenza Immunization Resources](#), which includes resources such as a template for patient consent forms, patient questionnaires and permanent personal immunization records.

28. What documentation does the ministry require for an epinephrine auto-injector claims submission?

Please refer to the [Ontario Drug Programs Reference Manual Section 6.15](#) for details on documentation for claim validation.

In addition to the reporting requirements for adverse events following immunization per the pharmacy User Agreement, pharmacists must also document when they administer the epinephrine auto-injector for inspection purposes.

The HNS claim for the epinephrine auto-injector will follow the claim for the influenza vaccine. Documentation includes:

- Name, pharmacy address and signature of the pharmacist who administered the epinephrine auto-injector.
- Name, strength/dose (where applicable) and quantity of the epinephrine auto-injector administered.
- Name and address of the patient
- Time and date the epinephrine auto-injector was administered
- Cross-reference with the claim for the publicly funded influenza vaccine administered to the same patient.

Pharmacies must keep a record when the epinephrine auto-injector was administered for emergency use due to a pharmacist-administered influenza vaccine.

Pharmacists should ensure all documentation is in accordance with the *Pharmacy Act, 1991*, *Drug and Pharmacies Regulation Act*, and the Ontario College of Pharmacists policies and guidelines.

Claim for payment through the Health Network System

29. When should the pharmacist submit the claim for payment for administration of the publicly funded influenza vaccine?

Pharmacists should submit the claim through the HNS the same day they administer the publicly funded influenza vaccine, subject to the exception for vaccines administered off-site described below.

Pharmacy students and interns that have valid injection training may administer the influenza vaccine; however, the respective injection-trained supervising pharmacist must submit the claim for payment through the HNS.

If a publicly funded influenza vaccine was administered off-site within the geographic boundaries of the local public health unit where the pharmacy is located and in compliance with section 20 of the User Agreement, pharmacists can submit the claim up to one business day after administration.

30. How are claims for influenza vaccine submitted through the HNS?

Please refer to the [Ontario Drug Programs Reference Manual Section. 6.15](#) for details on claims submission for this program.

Pharmacist must ensure that the patient's date of birth, Ontario health number and name (as it appears on the health card / document) are entered as part of the HNS claims submission. Failure to do so may impact the ability to submit future claims for these patients. In addition, by identifying the date of birth, pharmacists can align the appropriate vaccine to the patient's age group.

31. When submitting the claim for the epinephrine auto-injector due to an adverse reaction from the influenza injection, I notice the payment appears in the “dispensing fee” field – is that correct?

Yes, the payment appears in the “dispensing fee” field of the claims submission.

Adverse Drug Reactions

32. What are the reporting requirements for an adverse event following immunizations?

All adverse events following immunization must be reported to the local Medical Officer of Health within seven business days, per section 38 of the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*.

For complete reporting requirements, please refer to the pharmacy User Agreement for adverse events. For additional information, please contact your local public health unit. Refer to the ministry website for a list of [Ontario public health units](#).

33. If a patient has an adverse reaction to the influenza vaccine, who is responsible for administering the epinephrine auto-injector?

Should the adverse reaction occur after the administration of the influenza vaccine, the pharmacist who administered the influenza vaccine should also administer the epinephrine auto-injector.

Under the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991*, the administration of a substance by injection is a controlled act which unauthorized persons are prohibited from performing.

Where the administration of a substance by injection is done for the purposes of rendering first aid or temporary assistance in an emergency, individuals are exempted from the prohibition of performing this activity. However, it is advisable to speak with the Ontario College of Pharmacists if you have any additional questions about your responsibilities and/or accountabilities in this regard.

For claims submission purposes, the ministry requires the patient's Ontario health number and pharmacist identification for the use of an epinephrine auto-injector after an adverse reaction to the administered influenza vaccine.

Restrictions

34. Can pharmacists provide the publicly funded influenza vaccine to residents of long-term care homes or hospital in-patients?

No. Administration of the publicly funded influenza vaccine to long-term care home residents or hospital in-patients is not eligible for reimbursement by pharmacists through the HNS.

35. Can pharmacists administer the publicly funded influenza vaccine outside of a pharmacy?

Yes. Section 20 of the User Agreement has been amended for the 2020/21 season to permit pharmacists to administer publicly funded influenza vaccines outside the boundaries of the pharmacy if the vaccine is administered within the geographic boundaries of the local public health unit where their pharmacy is located. In addition, pharmacists must not administer the vaccine to hospital in-patients and residents living in licensed long-term care homes.

Pharmacies must ensure that the vaccine is being stored, transported and monitored appropriately when removing and administering doses outside the pharmacy. Please contact your local public health unit for assistance.

36. Can pharmacists submit claims for influenza vaccine administration manually to the ministry, using a paper claim?

No. The ministry does not accept paper claims for the publicly funded influenza vaccine.

37. Can pharmacists submit a claim for influenza vaccines administered by a nurse at a pharmacy clinic?

No. HNS claims are not permitted for vaccination administration by other health-care providers, such as nurses hired for pharmacy clinics.

Pharmacists who wish to continue providing nurse-led pharmacy influenza flu clinics to patients must follow the manual process of billing through the ministry. For more information on nurse-led pharmacy influenza/flu clinics, please contact the [ministry](#) or email UIIP.MOP@ontario.ca

38. Will the ministry reimburse the cost of the epinephrine auto-injector when administered by a nurse?

No. The ministry will only reimburse the pharmacy via the HNS in the event that the patient with a valid Ontario health number suffers an adverse reaction after a pharmacist administers the publicly funded influenza vaccine.

Nurses who deliver the influenza immunization at the pharmacy clinics are responsible for providing their own emergency supplies.

39. Can pharmacists submit a claim for the epinephrine auto-injector when it is provided to the patient to take home after the influenza vaccine was administered?

No. Claims submitted for epinephrine auto-injector that are associated with the publicly funded influenza vaccine emergency use are **only** reimbursed when the injection is given by the pharmacist as emergency first aid or temporary assistance as needed right after administering the influenza vaccine to a patient with a valid Ontario health number.

40. Can pharmacists submit a claim for epinephrine auto-injector for a patient without a valid Ontario health number?

Pharmacists may only submit claims for payment using the ministry's HNS for epinephrine auto-injectors administered to individuals with a valid Ontario health number for emergency use after administering the influenza vaccine.

41. If the pharmacist recommends to a physician that a patient should get their influenza vaccine, is the recommendation billable under the Pharmaceutical Opinion Program?

No. All Ontarians are encouraged to receive the influenza vaccine. In addition, because its administration is within the pharmacist's scope of practice and requires no permission from a primary care provider, such a recommendation does not meet the criteria of the Pharmaceutical Opinion Program.

Additional Information:

For pharmacies:

Please call ODB Pharmacy Help Desk at: 1-800-668-6641

For all other Health Care Providers and the Public:

Please call ServiceOntario, Infoline at 1-866-532-3161 TTY 1-800-387-5559. In Toronto, TTY 416-327-4282.