



**Office of the
Chief Medical
Health Officer**

NORTH ISLAND

250.331.8591

Charmaine Enns
MD, MHSc, FRCPC
355 – 11th Street
Courtenay, BC V9N 1S4

CENTRAL ISLAND

250.739.6304

3RD Floor 6475 Metral Drive
Nanaimo, BC V9T 2L9

COWICHAN REGION

250.737.2020

Shannon Waters
MD, MHSc, FRCPC
202-6425 Norcross Rd.
Duncan, BC V9L 6C5

SOUTH ISLAND

250.519.3406

Reka Gustafson
Chief MHO
MD, MSc, FRCPC

Dee Hoyano
MD, FRCPC

Mike Benusic
MD, CCFP, FRCPC

Murray Fyfe
MD, MSc, FRCPC

1837 Fort Street
Victoria, BC V8R 1J6

AFTER HOURS ON CALL

1.800.204.6166

September 19, 2023

Fall influenza and COVID-19 vaccination starts soon

Dear Physicians & Nurse Practitioners –

Updated influenza and COVID-19 vaccines will soon arrive. Most people will access these through pharmacies or Island Health clinics by invites sent through the provincial Get Vaccinated system. Vaccines will also be available directly for patients and staff in long-term care and hospitals, and through Community Health Services and First Nations health providers.

You play an important role in encouraging patients (especially those at higher risk of severe disease) to get vaccinated, and administering vaccines directly to your patients if you choose.

Participating as a community vaccine provider:

- Refer to bit.ly/CVPislandhealth. This page includes all instructions on ordering, storing, handling, administering and documenting. It will be updated throughout the season.
- You can order influenza vaccines as per usual, and new for this season you are also able to order COVID-19 vaccines. There are unique aspects of COVID-19 vaccines to consider, including a short shelf-life after first vial puncture and a requirement for all doses to be documented in the Provincial Vaccination Registry.
- The provincial fall vaccination campaign will start mid-October. You can begin ordering the week of October 2nd, with pick up starting the week of October 10th.
- We will receive shipments of vaccine throughout the season. For your first order, request only the quantity you anticipate needing for the first two weeks. Subsequent orders can be placed as needed. Vaccines will be distributed based on supply. If a specific ordered vaccine is no longer available, another equivalent product will be supplied. If no vaccine or acceptable substitute is available, you will be notified by your local health unit.
- Vaccines need to be picked-up at your local public health unit (islandhealth.ca/our-locations/health-unit-locations).

Supporting patients to get vaccinated:

- If participating as a community vaccine provider, offer directly to patients as you see fit without patients having to book appointments through the provincial system.
- Otherwise, refer patients to islandhealth.ca/learn-about-health/immunizations.
- If patients haven't received COVID-19 vaccines previously in BC or didn't receive an influenza vaccine in BC last season, advise them to register in the provincial Get Vaccinated system through getvaccinated.gov.bc.ca or by calling 1-833-838-2323. They will then be sent an invite to book an appointment.
- While anyone age 6 months and above will be eligible for updated COVID-19 and influenza vaccines, it is especially important for those at higher risk of severe disease including:
 - Age 65 and above
 - Age 6 months - 5 years (specifically for influenza; the following page can be used as a handout for parents)

If there are outstanding questions after reviewing bit.ly/CVPislandhealth, please contact your local public health unit: islandhealth.ca/our-locations/health-unit-locations.

Thank you for your collaboration in reducing severe disease and transmission of influenza and COVID-19.

Your Medical Health Officers recommend influenza vaccines for children

With influenza season approaching, we want to remind parents that vaccines will be available for children 6 months old and older and are a very effective way to reduce the risk of severe disease. Last year, we saw more children than usual hospitalized with influenza. Vaccination is particularly important for children younger than 5, who are at a higher risk of harm.

Invites for appointments will go out in October through the provincial Get Vaccinated system. If your child is not yet registered, register through getvaccinated.gov.bc.ca or by calling 1-833-838-2323.

If your child needs to get up-to-date with routine childhood vaccines (eg. diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, polio, measles, chickenpox, hepatitis B) or if you have questions about these, call your local public health unit at the phone number below. When influenza vaccines are available, they can be provided at the same time.



Campbell River Health Unit	250-850-2110
Comox Valley Health Unit	250-331-8520
Duncan Health Unit	250-709-3050
Esquimalt Health Unit	250-519-5311
Ladysmith Health Unit	250-755-3342
Lake Cowichan Health Unit	250-749-6878
Nanaimo Public Health Unit	250-755-3342
Parksville Family Place	250-947-8242
Peninsula Health Unit	250-544-2400

Port Alberni Health Unit	250-731-1315
Port Alice Health Unit	250-284-3555
Port Hardy Health Unit	250-902-6071
Port McNeill Health Unit	250-956-4711
Saanich Health Unit	250-519-5100
Salt Spring Island Health Unit	250-538-4880
Tofino and Ucluelet Public Health Unit	250-725-4020
Victoria Health Unit	250-388-2200
West Shore Health Unit	250-519-3490

For more information on influenza vaccines, visit islandhealth.ca/learn-about-health/the-flu-influenza, or call your local public health unit.

Sincerely, your Medical Health Officers:

Chief Medical Health Officer:

Dr. Reka Gustafson

North Island:

Dr. Charmaine Enns

Central Island:

Drs. Enns & Waters (covering)

Cowichan Region:

Dr. Shannon Waters

South Island:

Dr. Mike Benusic

Dr. Murray Fyfe

Dr. Dee Hoyano