

Ministry of Health

2025/2026 Influenza and COVID-19 Vaccine Administration in Long-Term Care Homes and Retirement Homes

This fact sheet is intended for informational purposes only. It is not intended to provide medical or legal advice.

The purpose of this fact sheet is to provide information for long-term care homes (LTCH) and retirement homes (RH) that plan to administer influenza (flu) and/or COVID-19 vaccine(s) for the 2025/2026 respiratory season.

Questions about this fact sheet can be sent to UIIP.MOH@ontario.ca.

A. Influenza (flu) and COVID-19 vaccine administration

Community Pharmacy Partnerships

Pharmacists can administer publicly funded influenza (flu) and/or COVID-19 vaccines to residents of LTCHs and RHs. If a LTCH or RH chooses to partner with a [community pharmacy](#) for the administration of influenza (flu) and/or COVID-19 vaccine, the pharmacist is responsible for storing, transporting, and administering their **own supply** of publicly funded vaccines. **Pharmacists may not administer vaccine that was ordered by the LTCH or RH.**

If a LTCH or RH intends to partner with a community pharmacy, they **should not** order publicly funded influenza (flu) and/or COVID-19 vaccine from their local public health unit for administration by the pharmacist, because any doses ordered by the LTCH and/or RH must only be administered by the LTCH and/or RH staff. Doses ordered and not used will be wasted.

LTCHs and RHs are not required to partner with a community pharmacy.

Policy Considerations

Providers who are administering publicly funded vaccines (including both influenza (flu) and COVID-19 vaccine) must be located within the **SAME** [local public health unit](#) as the LTCH and/or RH. Homes should review existing policies and procedures to make sure that the partnerships they are seeking are permitted within their existing contracts.

Self-administration for LTCHs

If a LTCH chooses not to partner with a community pharmacy, they can still continue to order influenza (flu) and/or COVID-19 vaccine directly from the [local public health unit](#) for self-administration.

Self-administration for licensed RHs

Licensed RHs that receive publicly funded vaccines other than influenza (flu) vaccine (e.g. Td, MMR, shingles etc.) are considered routine vaccine providers and can continue to order influenza (flu) and/or COVID-19 vaccine directly from the [local public health unit](#) for self-administration. Application to participate in the UIIP is not required.

Licensed RHs that do not receive other publicly funded vaccines (i.e. only receive publicly funded influenza (flu) vaccine) must apply to participate in the UIIP. RHs wishing to apply for the UIIP must have:

- An affiliated physician or nurse practitioner to provide a medical directive, or direct medical orders from each resident's physician or nurse practitioner;
- Staff who are trained and authorized to administer vaccines; and
- A refrigerator that is:
 - dedicated to storing vaccines to be inspected by the public health unit;
 - monitored onsite per the direction of the public health unit; and
 - meets the provincial [vaccine storage and handling guidelines](#).

Licensed RHs wishing to self-administer by participating in the UIIP should contact the Ministry of Health at UIIP.MOH@ontario.ca to inquire about late submission as the application deadline of June 30, 2025 has passed.

B. Universal Influenza Immunization Program (UIIP)

Ontario's Universal Influenza Immunization Program (UIIP) offers free influenza (flu) vaccine each year for individuals six months of age and older who live, work, or go to school in Ontario.

For more information on the UIIP, please visit the Ministry of Health website at: www.ontario.ca/page/universal-influenza-immunization-program

Importance of getting the influenza vaccine during the respiratory illness season

The influenza vaccine is the best defence against getting and spreading the influenza virus, helping to save lives and reduce the strain on our health care system. Protection against infection and illness from the influenza virus through influenza vaccination may provide added benefit in protecting against other diseases such as invasive Group A Streptococcal Disease (iGAS) or worsening of existing chronic illnesses such as cardiovascular disease.

Every year, individuals with influenza and influenza-related complications can experience morbidity and/or mortality and increase the burden on the healthcare system in the fall and winter months.

C. COVID-19 Vaccine Program

COVID-19 vaccines are available to everybody aged 6 months and older in Ontario at no cost, regardless of citizenship or immigration status, even if you do not have an Ontario health card.

For more information on the COVID-19 Vaccine Program, please visit the MOH website at www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-vaccine-program

Importance of getting the COVID-19 vaccine during the respiratory illness season

Getting vaccinated and staying up to date with your COVID-19 vaccinations is the best way to remain protected against the most severe outcomes of COVID-19 infection including hospitalization and death.

Vaccination may not always prevent symptomatic infection but it can help reduce severity if a person does become infected and decreases the risk of developing post COVID-19 condition (commonly known as long COVID).

D. Co-administration

Individuals aged 6 months and older can receive a COVID-19 vaccine at the same time as, or at any time before or after other routine vaccinations, including the influenza (flu) vaccine.