

Flu Season.

As of December 1, 2017, until March 31, 2018, under the Influenza Prevention Policy (attached), VCH staff, including all casuals and excluded staff; physicians, volunteers and contractors/consultants are required to have had the flu shot or wear a mask while in patient care areas and facilities.

Please arrange to either get your flu shot by December 1 (free with a care card and Health Authority Photo ID) or you will be required to wear a mask at all times when you are within the public and patient areas of the hospital. Patient care areas have been determined to include the lobbies and general public areas of Acute Facilities.

If you choose to get your flu shot, please let the PM's on your projects know that you've done so by sharing a copy of the paperwork you receive or they'll be expecting to see you in a mask.

If you have further questions or concerns, please contact a PM on one of your projects.

Thank you for your cooperation.

PUBLIC CLINIC LOCATOR

<http://immunizebc.ca/clinics/flu#8/49.246/-123.116>

Influenza Prevention Policy

1. Introduction

Description

Influenza can be a serious contagious disease spread by droplet transmission through close contact with an infected individual. The Public Health Agency of Canada estimates that in a given year there are an average of 12,200 hospitalizations related to influenza¹⁻³ and approximately 3,500 deaths attributable to influenza.⁴ Infected individuals are highly contagious and can transmit influenza for 24 hours before they are symptomatic.

Among vaccine-preventable diseases, influenza causes by far the most deaths, outpacing all other vaccine-preventable diseases combined. Hospitalized patients are frequently more vulnerable to influenza than members of the general population. Influenza in vulnerable groups, especially the elderly, the very young and the immunosuppressed, is associated with significant morbidity and mortality. It is a major contributor to hospitalizations in winter.

Health care workers have been implicated as the source of influenza in health care settings. Vaccination of health care workers will reduce their risk of getting influenza and spreading it to patients. The most effective strategy for preventing influenza is annual vaccination. Influenza vaccine is safe and effective.

The wearing of procedure masks can serve as a method of source control of infected health care workers who may have had no symptoms. Procedure masks may also protect unvaccinated health care workers from as yet unrecognized infected patients or visitors with influenza.

Other infection control measures such as rapid identification of ill patients, hand hygiene, cough etiquette, restrictions on work and visiting, and the use of anti-viral medications all help but vaccination remains the cornerstone of efforts to control influenza transmission.

Scope

This policy applies to all Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) Staff members who attend or may attend a Patient Care Location.

This policy also applies to visitors who attend a Patient Care Location.

2. Policy

2.1. Policy Statement

All individuals covered by this policy must be vaccinated annually against Influenza or wear a procedure mask during the Policy Application Period when in a Patient Care Location in accordance with this policy. During an Influenza outbreak, the MHO may implement additional influenza prevention and control measures.

2.2. Responsibilities

2.2.1. Staff

All Staff members:

- Must annually advise VCH of their Influenza immunization status in a manner acceptable to VCH by the Policy Application Date.
- If unimmunized during the Policy Application Period, must wear a procedure mask provided by VCH while at a Patient Care Location. Staff will be responsible for maintaining their mask in good condition in accordance with VCH protocols.
- Must continue to use personal protective equipment and abide by VCH's infection control practices to prevent the transmission of communicable disease, including Influenza.
- Who experience Influenza-like illness/respiratory infection, must follow VCH's established reporting protocol by calling the Employee Absence Call Line.
- Who witness any instances of non-compliance with this policy will report the incident of non-compliance immediately to their supervisor.

2.2.2. Visitors

Visitors who are not vaccinated against Influenza are required to wear a procedure mask provided by VCH while at a Patient Care Location. VCH will inform visitors of the requirements of this policy by means of posters and will make procedure masks available to visitors.

2.3. Compliance

Any Staff member found in violation of this policy may be subject to remedial and/or disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment, cancellation of contract and/or revocation of privileges.

Any Visitor found in violation of this policy may be denied access to Patient Care Locations.

3. References

1. Schanzer DL, Mcgeer A, Morris K. Statistical estimates of respiratory admissions attributable to seasonal and pandemic influenza for Canada. *Influenza and other Respiratory Viruses*. 2013;7(5):799-808.
2. Schanzer DL, Langley JM, Tam TWS. Role of influenza and other respiratory viruses in admissions of adults to Canadian hospitals. *Influenza and other Respiratory Viruses*. 2008;2(1):1-8.

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3. Schanzer DL, Langley JM, Tam TW. Hospitalization attributable to influenza and other viral respiratory illnesses in Canadian children. *Pediatr Infect Dis J*. 2006;25(0891-3668; 0891-3668; 9):795-800.
4. Schanzer DL, Sevenhuysen C, Winchester B, et al. Estimating influenza deaths in Canada, 1992-2009. *PLoS ONE*. 2013;8(11).

Related Policies

- [Baseline Health/Immunization Assessment](#)

Definitions

“**Influenza**” is a viral infection of the respiratory system. Symptoms of influenza include fever, cough, sore throat, muscle ache, extreme fatigue and headache. Unlike the common cold and most other respiratory viruses commonly called “the flu”, influenza virus infection can result in severe illness, pneumonia and even death. The incubation period of influenza is one to three days; the duration of virus shedding is usually not more than five days after onset of symptoms.

“**Patient Care Location**” includes any building, property, or site owned, leased, rented or operated by VCH where there are clients who are receiving care; and any client home or other location where covered individuals interact with clients in the course of their work for VCH. This does not include any location designated by VCH to be excluded from this definition.

“**Policy Application Date**” is the date established annually by the Provincial Health Officer after which all persons covered under this policy are required to be vaccinated against influenza or wear a mask in accordance with this policy. The Vaccination Required Date will usually be no later than the first week of December.

“**Policy Application Period**” is a period of time determined by the Provincial Health Officer and starting on the Vaccination Required Date. The Policy Application Period will usually be from the beginning of December until the end of March but may vary with seasonal epidemiology and will also include any period of time relating to novel strains of influenza. During this period, Covered Individuals will be required to be vaccinated against influenza or wear a surgical/procedure mask in accordance with this policy.

“**Staff**” means all employees (including management and leadership), medical staff (including physicians, midwives, dentists and nurse practitioners), residents, fellows and trainees, health care professionals, students, volunteers, contractors and other service providers engaged by VCH.

Questions

Contact: VCH Workplace Health Program at ohnp@vch.ca

Issued by:		
Name: <u>Dr. Patricia Daly</u>	Title: <u>Vice President, Public Health</u>	Date: <u>July 21, 2016</u>
Signature of issuing official		

Influenza Prevention Policy

Frequently Asked Questions

Contractors and Health Service Providers

Influenza – or the flu – can be a serious contagious disease, which is spread by droplet transmission through close contact with an infected person. Infected individuals are highly contagious and can transmit the virus for 24 hours before they show any symptoms.

Each year, there are approximately 3,500 deaths from influenza and its complications across Canada. Influenza causes by far the most deaths among vaccine-preventable diseases, outpacing all others combined. Hospitalized patients and seniors in residential care are more vulnerable to influenza than healthy adults. The vaccine is also less effective in the elderly and those with compromised immune systems, making it even more important that their caregivers are vaccinated.

Infected health care providers can pass the virus on to their patients before they even know they are sick. The most effective way to prevent the flu is by getting vaccinated and adopting additional preventative measures, such as proper hand hygiene and proper sneezing and coughing etiquette. Immunization helps physicians, health care providers and those who come into regular contact with patients reduce their risk of contracting influenza and spreading it to their patients.

To protect patients in our facilities, in 2012 British Columbia's health authorities adopted the Influenza Prevention Policy, requiring all employees, students, physicians, residents, **contractors**, vendors and volunteers to get immunized or to wear a mask during influenza season when in a patient care area. To further protect patients, the policy was expanded to include all visitors to our health care facilities.

The policy applies to ALL contractors, who work in Health Authority owned and operated patient care settings, such as hospitals residential/long-term care homes and community health care centres.

In addition, the policy applies to contracted agencies that receive health authority funding support AND provide patient care or patient care services in the community. Table below delineates contracted agencies that provide services in the community by policy application (yes or no).

Policy applies to the following contracted facilities or services provided in the community
<p>LTCF (licensed)</p> <p>Mental health housing (licensed)</p> <p>Addictions housing (licensed)</p> <p>Hospice (licensed)</p> <p>Acquired injury (licensed)</p> <p>Equipment loans programs</p> <p>Addictions counselors doing individual or group therapy</p> <p>Home support services (personal care, medication assistance, dietary) that may be provided in assisted living facilities</p>
Policy applies, however, facilities can apply for temporary exemption*
<p>Community living homes (licensed)</p>
Policy applies based on individual case review by Health Authority (Policy applies if health care is provided to majority of residents)
<p>Child and youth residential (licensed)</p> <p>Assisted living facilities</p>
Policy does not apply to the entire facility, though policy will apply to HA funded or employed health care workers providing care within the facility
<p>Supportive housing for seniors</p> <p>Smaller detox housing (not licensed)</p> <p>Emergency shelters</p> <p>Drop in day shelters</p> <p>Meal programs (meals on wheels, community kitchen)</p> <p>Group education sessions</p> <p>Adult day centres</p> <p>Childhood Development Centres</p> <p>Child care centres</p>

How do I comply with the Influenza Prevention Policy this year?

As a contractor and health service provider, you are covered by the policy, and must get a vaccination or wear a mask in patient care areas during the required vaccination period. Please report your vaccination choice to your supervisor.

By reporting your flu vaccination, you are in compliance with the policy for the rest of the influenza season. If you report that you choose to decline vaccination, you will be required to wear a surgical/procedure mask in patient care areas for the duration of the influenza season to comply with the policy.

What is a patient care area?

A patient care area/location is defined as an area within a health care facility, including a contracted facility, hallways or lobbies, which is accessible to patients, residents or clients who are there to access care or services.

It includes any other location where care is provided, such as home and community care locations (including a client's home). It does not include locations such as administrative areas or private offices, which are not generally accessed by patients, residents or clients.

I work in a counselling role with my clients. Am I covered by this policy?

Yes, you are covered by the policy and must get a vaccination or wear a mask during the required vaccination period. The policy applies whether you are providing services in an office, home or community environment.

I work in an administrative role and do not provide direct patient/client care. Am I covered by this policy?

Yes, you are covered by the policy anytime you are in a patient care area.

For example, if you work in an office environment where there are no patients or clients, you are not required to be vaccinated or wear a mask. However, if you work in an office environment where patients or clients might be present, you are required to be vaccinated or to wear a mask.

You are also required to vaccinate or mask anytime you leave your office and go into a patient care area such as a public hallway or washroom, or any other area where there are patients or clients present.

Am I covered by this policy if I am providing a non-health related service to a health authority, such as construction or courier services?

Yes, you are covered by the policy anytime you are in a patient care area.

What is the required vaccination period?

The required vaccination period will be declared by the provincial health officer – usually at the beginning of December, and will typically last until the end of March. During this period, all contractors and health service providers must have received a flu vaccination or wear a mask. All visitors will be asked to wear a mask if they haven't received a flu shot.

When and where do I have to wear a mask?

While the most effective way to prevent the transmission of influenza is to receive a flu shot, if you are not vaccinated you must wear a procedure mask whenever you are in a patient care area during the required vaccination period.

What type of mask should I wear?

Procedure masks are recognized for use in this policy. These have been shown to be effective in preventing the transmission of influenza.

When do masks need to be changed?

Simply change your mask when it gets overly moist – there is no set time designated when you need to change your mask.

It is important that you dispose of your used masks appropriately. Please dispose of masks in an available garbage can, and follow proper hand hygiene protocols before replacing with a new mask.

Where can I get my flu shot?

There are many places that you can get immunized:

- At your own doctor's office
- At a local pharmacy

You can find a flu clinic by calling 8-1-1 or visiting the flu clinic locator at www.health.gov.bc.ca/flu/.

How much does it cost to get vaccinated?

There is no charge for the flu shot if you identify yourself as a health care provider, regardless of where you receive the vaccine.

Date	Start Time	End Time	Location name	Address	City	Room location	Phone	Details
16-Oct	7:30	6:30	Vancouver General Hospital	2775 Laurel Street	Vancouver	Gordon and Leslie Diamond Centre Lobby	604.875.4111	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
17-Oct	7:30	6:30	Vancouver General Hospital	2775 Laurel Street	Vancouver	Gordon and Leslie Diamond Centre Lobby	604.875.4111	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
17-Oct	12:00	4:00	Lion's Manor	9020 Bridgeport Road	Richmond	Fentiman Meeting Room	604.675.2590	Drop in for staff
18-Oct	7:30	6:30	Vancouver General Hospital	2775 Laurel Street	Vancouver	Gordon and Leslie Diamond Centre Lobby	604.875.4111	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
18-Oct	9:00	2:00	GF Strong	4255 Laurel Street	Vancouver	Lobby	604.734.1313	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
18-Oct	12:00	4:00	Minoru Residence	6111 Minoru Boulevard	Richmond	Large Conference Room	604.244.5300	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
19-Oct	7:30	6:30	Vancouver General Hospital	2775 Laurel Street	Vancouver	Gordon and Leslie Diamond Centre Lobby	604.875.4111	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
19-Oct	12:00	4:00	Richmond Hospital	7000 Westminster Highway	Richmond	Atrium Lounge (between Gift Shop & Info. Desk)	604.278.9711	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
19-Oct	1:00	3:00	Sechelt Hospital	5544 Sunshine Coast Highway	Sechelt	Large Boardroom	604.885.2224	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
19-Oct	12:30	4:30	Willingdon Creek Village Residential Care	4980 Kiwanis Ave.	Powell River	Multi-Purpose Room	604.485.9868	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
19-Oct	12:00	4:00	Cedarview Lodge	1200 Cedar Village Close	North Vancouver	Large Boardroom	604.904.6400	Drop in for staff
20-Oct	7:30	6:30	Vancouver General Hospital	2775 Laurel Street	Vancouver	Gordon and Leslie Diamond Centre Lobby	604.875.4111	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
20-Oct	7:00	11:00	Richmond Hospital	7000 Westminster Highway	Richmond	Atrium Lounge (between Gift Shop & Info. Desk)	604.278.9711	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
20-Oct	2:00	4:00	Kiwanis Care Centre North Vancouver	2444 Burr Place	North Vancouver	Hallway Outside Boardroom	604.924.8300	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
20-Oct	11:00	4:00	Banfield Pavilion	2785 Ash Street	Vancouver	Room 106	604.875.4111	Drop in for staff
23-Oct	7:30	6:30	Vancouver General Hospital	2775 Laurel Street	Vancouver	Gordon and Leslie Diamond Centre Lobby	604.875.4111	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
24-Oct	7:30	6:30	Vancouver General Hospital	2775 Laurel Street	Vancouver	Gordon and Leslie Diamond Centre Lobby	604.875.4111	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
24-Oct	12:00	5:00	GF Strong	4255 Laurel Street	Vancouver	Lobby	604.734.1313	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
24-Oct	6:30	4:30	UBC Hospital	2211 Wesbrook Mall	Vancouver	Koerner Pavillion (outside of cafeteria)	604.822.7121	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
24-Oct	10:00	4:00	Powell River Hospital	5000 Joyce Avenue	Powell River	Conference Room 1	604.485.3211	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
24-Oct	11:00	4:00	Evergreen House	231 15th St E	North Vancouver	Main lobby	604.988.3131	Drop in for staff
25-Oct	7:30	6:30	Vancouver General Hospital	2775 Laurel Street	Vancouver	Gordon and Leslie Diamond Centre Lobby	604.875.4111	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
25-Oct	10:00	6:00	Lion's Gate Hospital	231 East 15th Street	North Vancouver	Main Lobby near Gift Shop	604.988.3131	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
25-Oct	12:00	4:00	Minoru Residence	6111 Minoru Boulevard	Richmond	Small Conference Room	604.244.5300	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
25-Oct	12:00	5:00	Squamish General Hospital	38140 Behrner Drive	Squamish	Cafeteria	604.892.5211	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
25-Oct	9:00	5:00	UBC Hospital	2211 Wesbrook Mall	Vancouver	Koerner Pavillion (outside of cafeteria)	604.822.7121	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
26-Oct	7:30	6:30	Vancouver General Hospital	2775 Laurel Street	Vancouver	Gordon and Leslie Diamond Centre Lobby	604.875.4111	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
26-Oct	7:00	3:00	Lion's Gate Hospital	231 East 15th Street	North Vancouver	Main Lobby near Gift Shop	604.988.3131	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
26-Oct	12:00	4:00	Richmond Hospital	7000 Westminster Highway	Richmond	Atrium Lounge (between Gift Shop & Info. Desk)	604.278.9711	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
26-Oct	1:00	3:00	Sechelt Hospital	5544 Sunshine Coast Highway	Sechelt	Large Boardroom	604.885.2224	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
26-Oct	9:00	5:00	UBC Hospital	2211 Wesbrook Mall	Vancouver	Koerner Pavillion (outside of cafeteria)	604.822.7121	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
26-Oct	10:00	4:00	Powell River Hospital	5000 Joyce Avenue	Powell River	Conference Room 1	604.485.3211	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
26-Oct	11:00	3:00	Minoru Residence	6111 Minoru Boulevard	Richmond	Large Conference Room	604.244.5300	Drop in for staff
27-Oct	7:30	6:30	Vancouver General Hospital	2775 Laurel Street	Vancouver	Gordon and Leslie Diamond Centre Lobby	604.875.4111	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
27-Oct	7:00	3:00	Lion's Gate Hospital	231 East 15th Street	North Vancouver	Main Lobby near Gift Shop	604.988.3131	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
27-Oct	7:00	11:00	Richmond Hospital	7000 Westminster Highway	Richmond	Atrium Lounge (between Gift Shop & Info. Desk)	604.278.9711	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
27-Oct	10:00	12:00	Kiwanis Care Centre North Vancouver	2444 Burr Place	North Vancouver	Hallway Outside Boardroom	604.924.8300	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
27-Oct	11:00	4:00	George Pearson Centre	700 West 57th Avenue	Vancouver	Cafeteria	604.321.3231	Drop in for staff
30-Oct	9:00	6:30	Vancouver General Hospital	2775 Laurel Street	Vancouver	Gordon and Leslie Diamond Centre Lobby	604.875.4111	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
31-Oct	9:00	6:30	Vancouver General Hospital	2775 Laurel Street	Vancouver	Gordon and Leslie Diamond Centre Lobby	604.875.4111	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
31-Oct	9:00	2:00	GF Strong	4255 Laurel Street	Vancouver	Lobby	604.734.1313	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.

31-Oct	6:30	4:30	UBC Hospital	2211 Wesbrook Mall	Vancouver	Koerner Pavillion (outside of cafeteria)	604.822.7121	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
31-Oct	10:00	11:30	Powell River Hospital	5000 Joyce Avenue	Powell River	Conference Room 1	604.485.3211	Drop in for staff
31-Oct	12:15	3:30	Powell River Hospital	5000 Joyce Avenue	Powell River	Conference Room 1	604.485.3211	Drop in for staff
1-Nov	9:00	6:30	Vancouver General Hospital	2775 Laurel Street	Vancouver	Gordon and Leslie Diamond Centre Lobby	604.875.4111	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
1-Nov	9:00	5:00	UBC Hospital	2211 Wesbrook Mall	Vancouver	Koerner Pavillion (outside of cafeteria)	604.822.7121	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
2-Nov	9:00	6:30	Vancouver General Hospital	2775 Laurel Street	Vancouver	Gordon and Leslie Diamond Centre Lobby	604.875.4111	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
2-Nov	9:00	5:00	UBC Hospital	2211 Wesbrook Mall	Vancouver	Koerner Pavillion (outside of cafeteria)	604.822.7121	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
2-Nov	10:00	11:30	Powell River Hospital	5000 Joyce Avenue	Powell River	Conference Room 1	604.485.3211	Drop in for staff
2-Nov	12:15	3:30	Powell River Hospital	5000 Joyce Avenue	Powell River	Conference Room 1	604.485.3211	Drop in for staff
3-Nov	9:00	6:30	Vancouver General Hospital	2775 Laurel Street	Vancouver	Gordon and Leslie Diamond Centre Lobby	604.875.4111	Drop in for staff & visitors. Must bring Care Card.
6-Nov	10:00	4:00	Richmond Hospital	7000 Westminster Highway	Richmond	Atrium Lounge (between Gift Shop & Info. Desk)	604.278.9711	Drop in for staff
7-Nov	9:30	12:00	Sechelt Hospital	5544 Sunshine Coast Highway	Sechelt	Large Boardroom	604.885.2224	Drop in for staff
7-Nov	1:30	2:30	Shorncliffe Intermediate Care Facility	5847 Medusa Street	Sechelt	The Meeting Room	604.885.5126	Drop in for staff
8-Nov	10:00	4:00	Richmond Hospital	7000 Westminster Highway	Richmond	Atrium Lounge (between Gift Shop & Info. Desk)	604.278.9711	Drop in for staff
9-Nov	9:30	12:00	Sechelt Hospital	5544 Sunshine Coast Highway	Sechelt	Large Boardroom	604.885.2224	Drop in for staff
9-Nov	1:30	2:30	Shorncliffe Intermediate Care Facility	5847 Medusa Street	Sechelt	The Meeting Room	604.885.5126	Drop in for staff
10-Nov	10:00	4:00	Vancouver General Hospital	899 12th Avenue West	Vancouver	Jim Pattison Pavilion Ground Floor Courtyard	604.875.4111	Drop in for staff
14-Nov	10:00	4:00	Lion's Gate Hospital	231 East 15th Street	North Vancouver	Main Lobby near Gift Shop	604.988.3131	Drop in for staff
15-Nov	10:00	4:00	Vancouver General Hospital	899 12th Avenue West	Vancouver	Jim Pattison Pavilion Ground Floor Courtyard	604.875.4111	Drop in for staff
16-Nov	10:00	4:00	Lion's Gate Hospital	231 East 15th Street	North Vancouver	Main Lobby near Gift Shop	604.988.3131	Drop in for staff
17-Nov	10:00	4:00	Vancouver General Hospital	899 12th Avenue West	Vancouver	Jim Pattison Pavilion Ground Floor Courtyard	604.875.4111	Drop in for staff
21-Nov	10:00	2:00	Squamish General Hospital	38140 Behrner Drive	Squamish	Boardroom	604.892.5211	Drop in for staff
23-Nov	10:00	2:00	Squamish General Hospital	38140 Behrner Drive	Squamish	Boardroom	604.892.5211	Drop in for staff