

Backgrounder

Influenza, Canadian Seniors and Fluzone® High-Dose

Sanofi is Canada's largest biopharma manufacturer, investing, innovating and operating across the full life sciences value chain.

Globally, Sanofi has been innovating in influenza vaccines for over 70 years, with more than 250 million vaccine doses manufactured and distributed globally each year. At the Toronto Campus, Sanofi will operate a brand-new manufacturing facility dedicated to the high-dose influenza vaccine.

Influenza in Canada

Influenza and pneumonia are consistently ranked among the top ten causes of death in Canada according to Statistics Canada.ⁱ

- The Public Health Agency of Canada estimates that flu causes approximately 15,000 hospitalizations and 3,500 deaths every year in Canada — the majority occurring in adults 65 and older.ⁱⁱ

Older adults continue to experience substantial influenza burden

		2025/26 ¹⁰	2024/25 ¹¹	2023/24 ¹²
	Lab-confirmed influenza incidence (total population)	145,895	138,612	103,173
	Lab-confirmed influenza incidence (≥65 years)	49,123 (33.7%)	45,080 (32.5%)	22,948 (22.2%)
	Hospitalizations (total population)	24,960	25,278	4,516
	Hospitalizations (≥65 years)	4,168 (16.7%)	4,790 (19%)	2,032 (45%)
	ICU* admissions (total population)	629	709	493
	ICU* admissions (≥65 years)	NR*	NR*	148 (30%)
	Influenza-related deaths (total population)	556	671	256
	Influenza-related deaths (≥65 years)	NR*	NR*	182 (71%)

* ICU=Intensive care unit; NR=not reported

Seniors and The Flu

Influenza is a serious and potentially life-threatening illness for seniors, who are at a greater risk of influenza-related complications and hospitalization.

- * For many seniors, influenza's impact extends far beyond the respiratory system. Influenza can be a silent trigger for cardiovascular complications, increasing the risk of strokeⁱⁱⁱ up to eight times and the risk of heart attack up to 10 times.^{iv}
- With more than 80% of seniors living with at least one chronic condition, influenza represents a significant and cascading health risk.^v Influenza can worsen chronic conditions like diabetes and hypertension.^{vi}
- Seniors are disproportionately hospitalized due to influenza compared to other age groups. In the 2023-2024 influenza season, 4,516 influenza-associated hospitalizations were reported by participating provinces and territories.^{vii} Adults 65 years of age and older had the highest cumulative hospitalization rates accounting for 45% of reported hospitalizations.^{viii}
- Influenza puts seniors at risk of losing independence after hospitalization from flu with about one in five seniors experiencing a decline in ability to carry out daily activities.^{ix}

Why Fluzone High-Dose

Fluzone High-Dose is a vaccine specifically designed to help protect adults 65 years and older who are more vulnerable to influenza and its complications.

- Standard-dose influenza vaccines may not provide optimal protection for older adults, making it critical to have a vaccine designed specifically for them.
- Fluzone High-Dose^x contains four times the amount of antigens to help generate a stronger immune response in older adults.^{xi}
- Fluzone High-Dose vaccination has been shown to prevent 24% more cases of influenza caused by any circulating strain and 51% more cases caused by vaccine-similar strains compared to a standard-dose vaccine.^{xii}
- Studies conducted over 12 influenza seasons in more than 45 million adults 65 years and older showed that Fluzone High-Dose prevented more influenza complications and influenza-related hospitalizations compared to standard-dose vaccines.^{xiii}
- However, receiving a standard-dose influenza vaccine is still better than not being vaccinated at all, as it helps reduce the risk of influenza and the severity of illness.

How well are adults 65 years and older protected against influenza complications across Canada?

- Public reimbursement for Fluzone High-Dose varies across Canada, and not all adults 65 years and older are eligible, leaving many older adults without equitable access to the protection they need.^{xiv}
- Ontario is currently the only province to offer Fluzone High-Dose to all seniors 65 years of age and older through its Universal Influenza Immunization Program (UIIP) – some provinces provide Fluzone High-Dose on a limited basis for seniors in long-term care or

for those who are high risk. Fluzone High-Dose is also available through most private payers across the country.

- It is important for adults 65 years and older to get their flu shot, as they are more susceptible to influenza and its complications due to natural and progressive weakening of the immune system over time.^{xv}
- Getting a flu shot is the most effective way to prevent influenza. The high-dose influenza vaccine, when available, is among the flu vaccines preferentially recommended by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) for adults 65 years and older.^{xvi}

ⁱ [Top 10 leading causes of death, Canada, 2023](#)

ⁱⁱ [Flu \(seasonal influenza\): Spread, prevention and risks - Canada.ca](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ Wang CS, et al. Impact of influenza vaccination on major cause-specific mortality. *Vaccine*. 2007;25(7):1196–1203

^{iv} Warren-Gash C, et al. (2018) Laboratory-confirmed respiratory infections as triggers for acute myocardial infarction and stroke: a self-controlled case series analysis of national linked datasets from Scotland. *Eur Respir J*, 51:1701794

^v Canadian Institute for Health Information. Survey shows how health care experiences of older adults in Canada compare internationally. Available at: <https://www.cihi.ca/en/survey-shows-how-health-care-experiences-of-older-adults-in-canada-compare-internationally>

^{vi} Wang CS, et al. Impact of influenza vaccination on major cause-specific mortality. *Vaccine*. 2007;25(7):1196–1203

^{vii} FluWatch report: July 21 to August 24, 2024 (week 30–34). Government of Canada. Available at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/fluwatch/2023-2024/week-30-34-july-21-august-24-2024.html>

^{viii} FluWatch report: July 21 to August 24, 2024 (week 30–34). Government of Canada. Available at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/fluwatch/2023-2024/week-30-34-july-21-august-24-2024.html>

^{ix} Andrew MK, et al. (2021) Persistent Functional Decline Following Hospitalization with Influenza or Acute Respiratory Illness. *J Am Geriatr Soc*, 69(3):696–703

^x Product Monograph. FLUZONE High-Dose. Sanofi Vaccines Canada Ltd. May 29, 2026.

^{xi} Product Monograph. FLUZONE High-Dose. Sanofi Vaccines Canada Ltd. May 29, 2026.

^{xii} DiazGranados CA, et al. *N Engl J Med*. 2014;371(7):635–645. doi:10.1056/NEJMoa1315727

^{xiii} Lee JKH, et al. *Vaccine X*. 2023;14:100327. doi:10.1016/j.jvacx.2023.100327

^{xiv} Publicly Funded Seasonal Influenza Vaccines in Canada: 2025–2026. Immunize Canada. Available at: https://www.immunize.ca/sites/default/files/publicly_funded_flu_vaccines_202526_e.pdf

^{xv} Product Monograph. FLUZONE High-Dose. Sanofi Vaccines Canada Ltd. April 22, 2025.

^{xvi} An Advisory Committee Statement (ACS) National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI). Statement on seasonal influenza vaccines for 2025–2026. Available at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/vaccines-immunization/national-advisory-committee-immunization-statement-seasonal-influenza-vaccines-2025-2026.html>