



## ALERT FOR PHYSICIANS/PHARMACISTS

# interior health

### From your Medical Health Officers

**October 31,  
2012**

**HEALTH CANADA  
ANNOUNCEMENT  
AUTHORIZED USE  
AGRIFLU & FLUAD  
INFLUENZA VACCINES**

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#### **Agriflu and Flud influenza vaccines authorized for use in Canada**

Physicians and pharmacists can now recommence use of Agriflu and Flud vaccines for influenza immunization of their patients.

Health Canada recommended the temporary suspension of use of these products last week, but today lifted that suspension and declared these products safe and effective for use in Canada. The following is an extract of their statement today:

“Health Canada has completed its review of safety information for Agriflu and Flud and is releasing the two seasonal flu vaccines for immediate use. As a precautionary step, the products were temporarily pulled from distribution last week by the manufacturer and held from use in flu vaccination clinics at the request of Health Canada while it investigated any possible concerns.

Health Canada looked at the results of its own testing, conducted a health risk assessment, and reviewed information from its European partners and data submitted by Novartis in making its decision. None of the information reviewed indicated a safety issue.

The Public Health Agency of Canada is now advising health care professionals in possession of these vaccines that they can start using them once again. As such, those administering the vaccines are reminded to follow existing labeling directions as well as allowing the vaccine to come to room temperature before use. The products should also be shaken and checked for any white floating material before they are injected. Such material is not uncommon in vaccines and does not pose a risk to health.

The Public Health Agency of Canada closely monitors for vaccination-related adverse events to detect potential safety issues in a timely manner. To date it has received no reports of serious or unexpected adverse events related to these vaccines.

The Public Health Agency of Canada and Health Canada will continue to work with the company to monitor the safety and effectiveness of the vaccines used here in Canada. Should a safety concern be identified, immediate and appropriate action will be taken.”

The IH publicly-funded influenza vaccine supply consists of Vaxigrip (which was not included in the temporary suspension) and Agriflu. Some other regions in BC were allocated Flud as part of the nationally coordinated influenza vaccine ordering and purchase program to ensure as multiplicity of vaccine suppliers. The Canadian National Advisory Committee on Immunization states that all three of these vaccines are equally safe and effective, and recommends no preference of vaccine product for groups such as seniors.



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