

Infection Prevention & Control

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Influenza season is upon us once again. With the easing of some Covid-19 restrictions throughout the province, unlike last year when strict precautions were in place, we anticipate seeing Influenza in the Community and our Care Homes this year. As in the past, once the influenza vaccine is made available by Alberta Health Services (AHS) in October, Intercare will again be offering Influenza vaccinations for all residents and Intercare staff.

What does the influenza vaccine do for us? The influenza vaccine protects us against the influenza virus.

Who should have the influenza vaccine? Everyone is at risk of influenza. AHS recommends that individuals aged six (6) months and older receive an influenza vaccine.

Influenza can make people very sick and lead to other health problems, especially for individuals who:

- ♥ Have heart or lung conditions, diabetes, a weak immune system, a lot of extra weight, or other health problems ;
- ♥ Live in a care facility, such as a long term care and supportive living facility;
- ♥ Are under age 5 years or over 65 years of age;
- ♥ Are pregnant; or
- ♥ Are Indigenous.

It is important that individuals receive the influenza vaccine annually if they:

- ♥ Are at high risk for influenza;
- ♥ Have close contact with someone who is at high risk for influenza, such as family members and caregivers;
- ♥ Are a health care provider, to help protect the residents/patients they are caring for.

How many doses of the influenza vaccine are needed each year? Two (2) doses are needed, at least four (4) weeks apart, for individuals who are under the age of nine (9) years and it is the first time they are receiving the Influenza vaccine. Beyond that, individuals only needs one (1) dose each Influenza season.

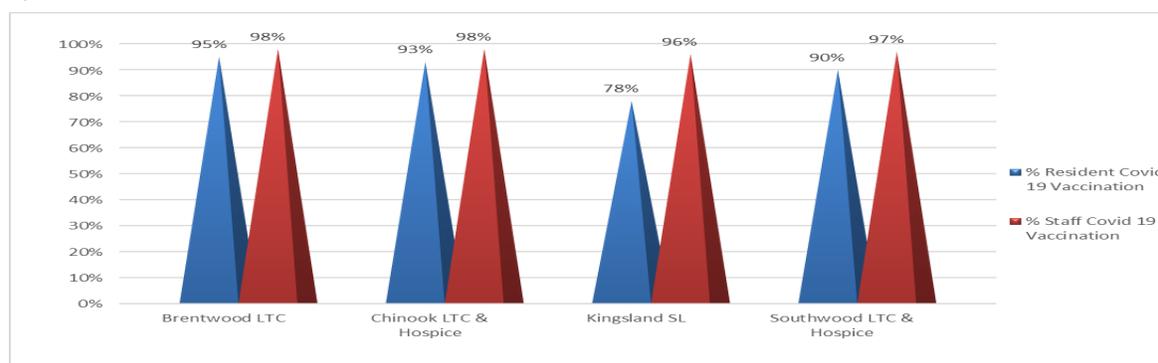
Are there different types of influenza vaccines? Yes. There are many types of influenza vaccines. Each year, Alberta Health (AH) reviews information about influenza from other countries, in order to help them decide which vaccines will be offered in a given year.

How well does the influenza vaccine work? The influenza vaccine starts to protect you about two (2) weeks after it is administered. How well the vaccine works can vary from one influenza season to another because a new vaccine is made every year to protect against three (3) or four (4) influenza viruses that are anticipated most likely to spread and cause infection that year. Even when the vaccine does not exactly match the viruses that are spreading it can still help protect individuals from getting influenza or getting as sick from it. The influenza vaccine is the best way to help prevent the spread of influenza to others and to lower one’s risk of getting influenza and developing health related problems.

COVID-19 Vaccination in Continuing Care

Covid-19 vaccinations first became available to vulnerable residents and staff in the continuing care sector earlier this year. Since that point in time, a very high percentage of these individuals have all become fully vaccinated (having received two (2) doses of the COVID19 vaccine). As an additional safeguard, many residents have also received a third ‘booster dose’ of the COVID-19 vaccine. The availability of COVID-19 immunization, particularly in long term care (LTC), has served to protect otherwise vulnerable residents and staff from experiencing serious COVID-19 virus related illness.

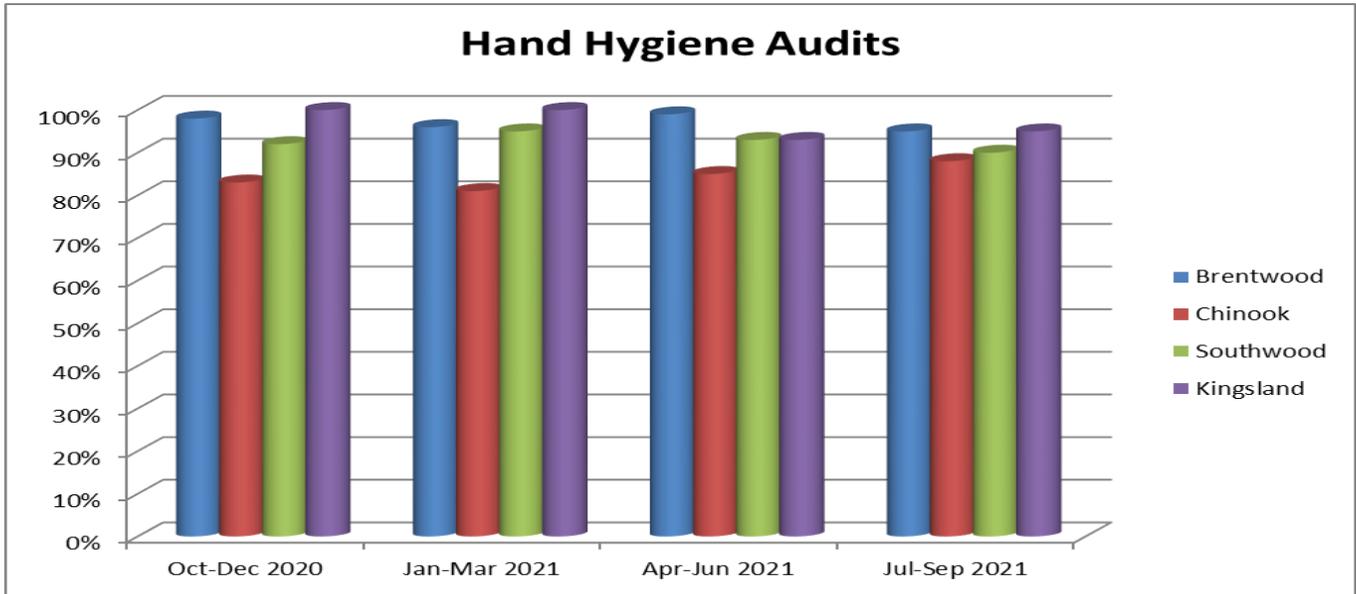
The graph below illustrates current **COVID-19 vaccination rates** for residents and staff at Intercare facilities.



Hand Hygiene Audit Results (2021)

Hand Hygiene Auditing continues to be done on a monthly basis at all Intercare sites. During these audits, the “Four (4) Moments of Hand Hygiene” are observed, as well as proper glove use.

The graph below shows results of on-going Hand Hygiene Auditing at Intercare Care Homes.



Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Audit Results

As the Covid-19 global pandemic continues and influenza season arrives, all Intercare Care Homes continue to complete PPE audits on a weekly basis. The frequency of PPE auditing may change in the future depending upon CMOH restrictions and requirements.

The graph below shows results of on-going PPE Auditing (2021) at Intercare Care Homes:

