

National Institute on Ageing Launches Updated Vaccine Pamphlets with Recommendations Specifically for Older Canadians

New vaccine guides aim to better protect older adults from a 'triple-demic' this cold and flu season

TORONTO, November 13, 2023 — One of the best defenses against serious illness and disability in older adults this fall and winter is getting vaccinated against seasonal influenza, RSV, COVID-19, pneumonia and other vaccine preventable diseases like shingles, tetanus and diphtheria.

Navigating which vaccines to get and when can be challenging, especially when coverage and where one can get them can vary. In response to both new and updated vaccines becoming available, the National Institute on Ageing (NIA) is releasing updated versions of its pamphlets titled [A Guide to Vaccines for Older Canadians](#), and [COVID-19 Vaccines — What Older Canadians Need to Know](#). These two unique resources provide easy-to-understand and practical information in 18 languages to inform and prepare older Canadians especially for the predicted 'triple-demic' coming this cold and flu season, and beyond.

Flu and RSV season typically begins in November and ends as late as May. While most cases of influenza and RSV are mild, they can become more serious. Adults aged 65 years and older are at much higher risk: they make up a fifth of Canada's population, but represent approximately 90 per cent of deaths caused by influenza, RSV, COVID-19 and pneumonia in Canada.

Adults 65 years and older also experience significantly more complications with respiratory infections, and have a higher risk of complications with pneumonia and shingles due in part to age related changes such as reduced lung strength and weaker natural immunity.

"We need far greater awareness that many cases of common respiratory and other infections and their complications can be prevented by vaccination," says Dr. Samir Sinha, Director of Health Policy Research at the NIA, "Despite the widespread availability of vaccines for several years, even when free, uptake has been underwhelming amongst older Canadians."

The Canadian vaccine landscape is fragmented, which is evident from the varying coverage of recommended vaccines across provinces and territories. While the costs of many recommended vaccinations are fully covered, older adults may have to pay around \$200-\$300 out-of-pocket to receive shingles or RSV vaccinations. Knowing what vaccines can help support healthy and independent ageing, can help older adults, their families and caregivers make informed choices that can better enable healthy ageing.

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If you are interested in discussing the importance of vaccination with the co-author of these important guides, Dr. Samir Sinha, NIA Director of Health Policy Research, please contact Magdalen Stiff, Director of Communications at magdalen.stiff@torontomu.ca.

Funding for the Guide to Vaccines for Older Canadians pamphlet was generously provided by CSL Seqirus, GlaxoSmithKline, Moderna and Sanofi in the form of unrestricted educational grants. All of the research, writing and recommendations herein have been independently produced by the NIA on the basis of sound evidence.

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About The National Institute on Ageing

The National Institute on Ageing (NIA), based at Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU; formerly Ryerson University), is Canada's leading policy and research centre dedicated to enhancing successful and healthy ageing throughout people's lives. Through our collaborative approach, expert-driven analysis, and public-facing reports and tools, the NIA provides meaningful research, analysis, advice and advocacy on the most pressing issues that are affecting the health and wellbeing of older Canadians.

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