



October 16, 2020

GFHC FLU SHOT CLINICS - UPDATE

Key Points:

- * **POSTPONED: Flu Clinic #2 (Tues, Oct 20)**
- * **NOW OUT OF STOCK: HIGH-DOSE FLU SHOTS (for >65 years)**
- * **FURTHER UPDATES TO FOLLOW**

Re: FLU CLINIC #1 - Fri, Oct 16 - Priority: Seniors

Dear Patients,

We would like to thank all of our patients who attended today's first Flu Shot Clinic, intended to prioritize our Senior patients receiving High-Dose (HD) flu shots. Today was really a Tale of Two Clinics: We were incredibly pleased with how smoothly everything ran for the first three quarters of the afternoon, despite the necessary social distancing protocols in place. Unfortunately, we are also incredibly disappointed to have run out of High-Dose shots for the latter quarter of the afternoon. We know that many of you arriving later today felt let down. As proud as we are of how efficiently the Flu Clinic started, we are certainly feeling frustrated with how it ended.

Like all flu shot providers, we are limited by the number of vaccines we are given by Public Health. Every year, Public Health only provides a partial initial shipment, based on the number of shots ordered last year; this year was no different. Moreover, we are only able to submit requests for additional resupply approximately 2-3 weeks after the initial shipments are received.

This year our office was given approximately 3/4 of the number of HD shots that we used last year. Under normal circumstances, the shots would have far surpassed our needs for a Seniors-only flu clinic. However, the reality is that the demand for flu shots this year is considerably higher than in years past, and for some weeks now we have been in contact with patients very eager to get their flu shots as soon as possible. This is unquestionably a GOOD thing... We are quite pleased to know that our patients are motivated to do their part to protect themselves and those around them.

Accordingly, we made the decision to run our first Seniors flu clinic now, rather than waiting until November to accommodate the overwhelming number of requests. In hindsight, this was



perhaps the wrong decision. We were unable to fully accommodate the considerably higher than expected volume of patients over 65 today.

We offer the above mostly by way of explanation, not excuse. Again, we are personally frustrated and embarrassed that today's clinic ended as it did, and are unreservedly apologetic for any inconvenience and frustration it caused any of our patients. All we can say is that we're doing our best in trying times, and we will certainly learn from this going forward!

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- **FLU CLINIC #2 (Tues, Oct 20) = POSTPONED:** We have made the decision to postpone next week's Flu Clinic #2. The clinic will be rebooked at a later time, once our vaccine supplies are restocked and sufficient.
- **FLU SHOT TIMING:** As noted above, we are well aware that many of our patients are quite eager to get their flu shots as soon as possible, particularly given the realities around a second surge of COVID. Please remember that it is still early-- while it is important to be prepared before influenza begins circulating widely in the community, that is not happening yet. Moreover, **many experts consider late October-early November to be the optimal time to receive one's seasonal influenza shot.**
- **HD vs STANDARD SHOTS FOR SENIORS:** For patients over 65 looking to get their flu shot, **if an HD shot is not available it is completely appropriate to receive a standard-dose shot instead.** While the HD shot is intended to provide slightly higher protection, it is frankly most important that you get immunized with any shot rather than to worry about which particular version.
- **POP-UP FLU CLINICS:** Aside from our office and local pharmacies, the North Toronto Ontario Health Team (OHT) is planning on holding several pop-up flu clinics in the coming weeks: <http://northtorontoohht.ca/flu>. As with the type of shots, it is more important to us that you get a flu shot rather than worry about where! As always, if you do get a flu shot anywhere other than our clinic, please do let us know so that we can update your chart appropriately.
- **SUPPLY/RESTOCK UPDATES:** We will be sure to provide additional updates once our office is fully stocked with both HD and standard-dose flu shots.

Sincerely,

GFHC Staff