

On April 8, 2021, the Ministry of Health issued the Circular Prevention and Control of Influenza: Recommendations for the 2021-2022 season, with the most recent WHO indications on the composition of influenza vaccines.

During the 2020/2021 flu season, a drastic reduction in cases of flu-like syndrome was observed and, to date, the InNet laboratory network has not identified any cases of flu. Influenza transmission may have been affected by the prevention measures currently in place for Covid-19 or the limited introduction of influenza viruses into countries due to travel restrictions and border closures.

However, prevention measures and travel restrictions vary from country to country, and easing them could also increase transmission, leading to a potential co-circulation of influenza and SARS CoV-2 viruses and a greater impact on vulnerable populations and on health systems.

In the annual meeting, held on February 26, 2021, WHO recommended the new vaccine composition for the 2021/2022 season, listing the viruses to be included in the quadrivalent and trivalent formulation. Composition of the quadrivalent vaccine for the northern hemisphere in the 2021/2022 season:

Vaccines obtained in embryonated chicken eggs

- A / Victoria / 2570/2019 (H1N1) pdm09-like virus
- A / Cambodia / e0826360 / 2020 (H3N2) -like virus
- B / Washington / 02/2019-like virus (lineage B / Victoria)
- B / Phuket / 3073/2013-like virus (lineage B / Yamagata).

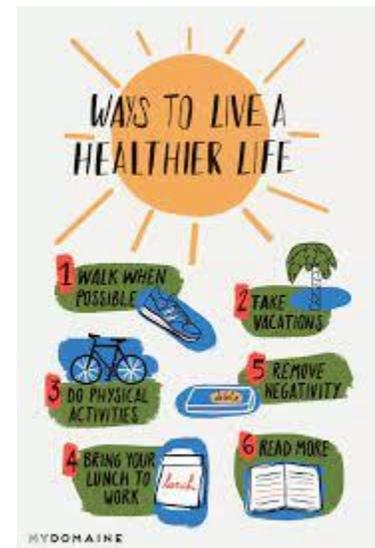
In the case of trivalent vaccines, the WHO recommends the insertion of the B / Washington / 02/2019-like virus strain (lineage B / Victoria), in addition to the two type A strains. Vaccines obtained on cell cultures

- A / Wisconsin / 588/2019 (H1N1) pdm09-like virus
- A / Cambodia / e0826360 / 2020 (H3N2) -like virus
- B / Washington / 02/2019-like virus (lineage B / Victoria)
- B / Phuket / 3073/2013-like virus (lineage B / Yamagata).

In the case of trivalent vaccines, the WHO recommends the insertion of the B / Washington / 02/2019-like virus strain (lineage B / Victoria), in addition to the two type A strains. WHO recommends reconsidering the priority of risk groups for influenza vaccination during the Covid-19 pandemic for the following reasons:

- ensure optimal control of influenza among high-risk groups of severe Covid-19 disease and influenza. Hospitalization in healthcare facilities could increase the risk of exposure to Sars-CoV-2 and the subsequent development of severe forms of Covid-19
- decrease access to the emergency room and hospitalizations for influenza
- reduce absenteeism among healthcare workers and other essential services for the response to Covid-19
- ensure the management and optimal use of potentially restricted seasonal influenza vaccines around the world.

At-risk groups with the highest priority



National Vaccination Registry (Avn) of the Ministry of Health will allow in the 2021-2022 season to collect the data of vaccinated subjects also for influenza vaccines.

For the registration of the flu vaccine doses and for the respective denominators, two ad hoc online forms are available (whose paper form is available in Annex 1 and 2), whose web address for compilation is.

The computerized data will be entered into the web platform by the Regions, provisionally, no later than January 31, 2022 and definitively no later than April 15, 2022.

It is emphasized the importance of collecting and recording on the specific form both the data of the vaccine doses (by trade name) carried out and the population eligible for vaccination are online.

The ECDC estimates that 4 to 50 million symptomatic cases of influenza occur each year in Europe and that 15,000 / 70,000 European citizens die each year from causes associated with influenza. In our country, influenza and pneumonia are classified among the top 10 leading causes of death.

We recall that in Italy the surveillance of influenza makes use of various monitoring systems that are part of the ISS with the contribution of the Ministry of Health with the support of the Regions and Autonomous Provinces:

- InluNet Epi
- Influnet Vir
- Monitoring of the progress of severe and complicated forms of confirmed flu.

Finally, during the current inter-pandemic phase (period between influenza pandemics), the National Strategic-Operational Plan for Preparation and Response to an Influenza Pandemic (PanFlu) 2021-2023, provides, in addition to the normal epidemiological surveillance of the syndromes - flu-like and virological flu, also the phase in which to develop preparedness activities by strengthening the ability to identify, prevent and respond to emerging influenza viruses with pandemic potential.

