

INFLUENZA, PNEUMOCOCCUS, ROTAVIRUS

Protecting yourself to protect health services

The annual flu vaccination campaign, which will begin on October 13, must be run and understood in the context of an unprecedented health crisis, to prevent the usual winter infections, particularly among the most vulnerable people, from being added to the rebound in Covid-19 cases. Like the health authorities, all health professionals, health centers, academies and patient associations, the National Academy of Pharmacy expects the authorities to take swift, justified, reasoned and reasonable, but firm, decisions.

- The joint circulation of influenza viruses and SARS-CoV-2, leading to very similar symptoms, will require a double diagnosis so as not to delay the management of each of these infections. However, only vaccination can mitigate the seasonal flu epidemic, whereas in 2018-2019, 10,700 hospitalizations were recorded with more than 1,890 serious cases admitted to intensive care units. It should be noted that during the same period, less than half the people at risk had been vaccinated and that 83% of serious cases presented at least one risk factor (Santé Publique France).
- Every year, in adults, invasive pneumococcal infections (pneumopathies and meningitis) lead to between 5,000 and 7,000 hospitalizations lasting an average of 14 days, with an estimated mortality rate of between 10% and 30%.
- Rotavirus gastroenteritis is a benign disease, but it is responsible for 14,000 hospitalizations each year in infants and children under the age of five and, in the acute stage, it represented 2% of emergency room visits during the winter of 2018-2019 (Santé Publique France).

At all costs, winter respiratory viral epidemics and rotavirus gastroenteritis must not be allowed to cause congestion for, or even saturate, hospitals, emergency services, community biology laboratories and the entire primary care system at the same time.

In this context, the National Academy of Pharmacy:

- **is encouraging people to be vaccinated against influenza in order to stop an epidemic whose seriousness should not be underestimated** compared with that of Covid-19;
- **reiterates the absolute necessity of influenza vaccination for all health workers and carers in order to protect the most vulnerable people in their care** (adults who are vulnerable because of their age, state of health or

profession, as well as children between six months and two years of age and their families with risk factors for severe influenza);

- **strongly recommends pneumococcal vaccination** for immunocompromised persons and patients with underlying disease that predispose them to invasive pneumococcal infection, as described in the Calendar of Immunization and Vaccination Recommendations 2020 (BEH March 2020);
- **promotes rotavirus vaccination of infants between two and six months of age**, emphasizing the role of health professionals (doctors, pharmacists, medical biologists, nurses, physiotherapists) in advising parents and encouraging them to have their children vaccinated.

In the absence of a vaccine against the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus, vaccination against other infections is our only defense against weakening our health system by protecting the most fragile. This is why the National Academy of Pharmacy:

- **demands that the flu vaccine be delivered to people in priority categories first;**
- **warns against** maintaining continuing psychosis, fueled by the media, which could inflate the demand for the vaccine and thereby lead to breakdowns in supply, at the risk of not being able to vaccinate the 12 million most vulnerable people as a priority,
- **underlines the need for full coverage of rotavirus vaccination**, at least for the most vulnerable, and even the most disadvantaged categories.