

Universal Flu Vaccination Recommended for the 2010-2011 Flu Season

On August 6, 2010 the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) issued its official 2010-2011 influenza (flu) vaccination recommendations. The ACIP now recommends that all persons 6 months of age and older be vaccinated annually, with a focus on vaccinating people at higher risk for flu-related complications. Thus, if your vaccine supply is limited, you may consider vaccinating high-risk individuals, including children, first. Complete recommendations are posted at www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/rr/rr5908.pdf.

Flu Vaccine is Arriving in Physician Offices and Clinics

Providers are encouraged to start vaccinating as soon as they receive vaccine. If you have not ordered flu vaccine, please place your order with the manufacturers now. Lists of flu vaccine manufacturers and distributors are posted at

www.flusupplynews.com/resources.cfm and www.preventinfluenza.org/profs_production.asp

When you receive your vaccine shipment, please take care to properly refrigerate it immediately (do not freeze), to maintain the cold chain. Guidance is available at www.eziz.org.

ACIP Recommends Limited Use of Afluria Vaccine in Children Under 9 Years of Age

Due to concerns regarding increased risk of fever and febrile seizures in young children, the ACIP has recommended that with rare exception, CSL Biotherapies vaccine (Afluria) be limited to use in persons 9 years of age and older. Afluria may be provided to children 5 years through 8 years of age with a medical condition that increases their risk of flu complications if no other age-appropriate influenza vaccine is available. Additional details are posted at www.cdc.gov/media/pressrel/2010/s100806.htm.

Two Doses of Flu Vaccine are Recommended for Some Children Under 9 Years of Age

To assure the best protection, it is recommended that any child 6 months through 8 years of age receive 2 doses of flu vaccine unless it is determined that the child received:

- a) at least one dose of H1N1 vaccine in 2009-10
AND
- b) seasonal flu vaccine before 2009-10 OR 2 doses of seasonal vaccine in 2009-10

The minimum interval between doses is 4 weeks. A flowsheet that you may use to identify children who need 2 vaccine doses is posted at www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/rr/rr5908.pdf (page 34).

Children 9 years of age and older may receive 1 dose of flu vaccine during the 2010-2011 season.

Early Flu Cases Suggest the Flu Strains that may be Prevalent this Season

It is not unusual for sporadic cases of influenza to be reported during the months leading up to the fall and winter flu season and detection of such cases does not necessarily mean that the flu season will come early. Such cases often suggest the kind of flu strains that might be prevalent during the upcoming season and can indicate whether the vaccine strains in the vaccine are a good match with the strains that will likely be prevalent.

During late June and July, two small influenza outbreaks were detected in two non-bordering counties in a Mid-Western state. Testing of the causative strains, together with testing of strains from 11 other states where flu cases have been observed, suggests that the H3N2 viruses that will be seen this year will be similar to the A/Perth/16/2009-like H3N2 virus antigen that is included in this year's vaccine.

All H1N1 Monovalent Vaccine will Expire by September 15, 2010

Regardless of the date printed on the label, all monovalent H1N1 vaccine distributed in the United States will expire by September 15, 2010. This is due to a decision by sanofi pasteur to shorten the expiration date of its H1N1 vaccine to ensure that the vaccine meets potency standards. There are no safety concerns, so individuals who received the monovalent H1N1 vaccine do not need to take action.

All remaining expired vaccine may be returned through the federal Central Vaccine Recovery Program. Ancillary supplies such as syringes and needles should not be returned. For additional information, visit

www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/QA_Central_Vacc_Rcvry_Prog.htm.

Stay Up-to-date with the Latest Information on the Flu Vaccine

Visit the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Immunization Program website at www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip or contact the Immunization Program at 213-351-7800.





August 6, 2010

Dear Provider,

As last year proved beyond a doubt, influenza can be unpredictable. Consequences of the 2009 H1N1 pandemic factored into CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' (ACIP) vote earlier this year to recommend universal influenza vaccination for all persons 6 months of age and older.

How does this affect you? Because all people age 6 months and older are now recommended to receive annual influenza vaccination, offering flu vaccine at any opportunity, for every patient is essential. Vaccination efforts should begin as soon as vaccine is available and continue throughout the influenza season. This year's vaccine will include the 2009 H1N1 strain as part of the regular seasonal vaccine. Communication science research conducted this summer has shown us that consumers may have safety concerns about the 2009 H1N1 strain being included in the vaccine, which can be a barrier to seeking vaccination. We rely on you to continue to emphasize that this year's flu vaccine is made in the same way as past flu vaccines. An average of 100 million doses of influenza vaccine have been used in the United States each year, and flu vaccines have an excellent safety record.

While everyone is now recommended to receive influenza vaccine, your high-risk patients—pregnant women, those with asthma, diabetes, or other chronic conditions—remain at risk for serious complications from influenza. CDC, and state and local public health agencies, will continue to reinforce efforts to emphasize the crucial importance of vaccine for these groups while simultaneously promoting annual influenza vaccination for everyone in the community. Realistically, your practice may be limited in the amount of vaccine doses you can provide, but you can still play a critical role in encouraging influenza vaccination for your patients and their families. You can urge your own patients to make sure they vaccinate themselves and their family members too, perhaps utilizing options that might be available through pharmacies, schools, workplaces, or other local partners. *Studies show that your recommendation makes the difference in convincing patients to seek influenza vaccination.*

Free resources such as patient education handouts, posters for your office, copies of the vaccine information statement (VIS), and updated information for you and your staff are available at www.cdc.gov/flu and www.flu.gov. For those of you who have been long-time champions of flu vaccine, we truly appreciate your efforts and hope that this new 'universal' recommendation makes your job that much easier. For those of you recently joining the fight to prevent the spread of influenza in your community, we hope that you will begin the practice of "*any opportunity, for every patient.*" Don't forget to vaccinate yourself and your staff so you can tell patients, "I got vaccinated. You should too." Vaccination continues to be the best protection against influenza, and your efforts will be reflected in a healthier community—**yours**.

Sincerely,

Anne Schuchat, MD
Rear Admiral, US Public Health Service
Assistant Surgeon General
Director, National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases