



*** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO ALL PROVIDERS AND OFFICE STAFF***

August 12, 2011

Dear Colleague:

The Bureau of Immunization (BOI) would like all health care providers to be aware that the initial distribution of influenza vaccine for this year has begun. Vaccination efforts should begin as soon as you receive vaccine and continue through late spring. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) continues to recommend annual influenza vaccination for all people ages 6 months and older. The recommendation seeks to remove barriers to influenza immunization and signals the importance of preventing influenza across the entire population.

Vaccinating Children 6 Months through 8 Years of Age

As per recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), children aged 6 months through 8 years who received at least one dose of seasonal influenza vaccine in the 2010-2011 influenza season need only one dose of the 2011-2012 seasonal influenza vaccine. Children who did not receive at least one dose in the 2010-2011 season should receive 2 doses of vaccine, separated by at least 4 weeks, this season. These recommendations apply to both injectable and intranasal influenza vaccines.

ACIP also continues its recommendation that the seasonal influenza vaccine manufactured by CSL under the brand name Afluria® should not be administered to children ages 6 months to 8 years, due to increased reports of febrile seizures associated with the use of other CSL seasonal influenza vaccine products in Australia, and increased frequency of fever in children ages 5 years to 8 years in one U.S. trial. Children ages 5 to 8 years with medical conditions that put them at high risk for influenza complications, should only receive Afluria if no other age-appropriate, licensed seasonal influenza vaccine is available.

Vaccine Ordering

BOI is now accepting Vaccines for Children (VFC) influenza vaccine orders; orders will **only** be accepted electronically using the Online Registry at www.nyc.gov/health/cir. After logging into the Online Registry, click on the VFC icon and select the Order Influenza Vaccine tab. Please submit an order for **all** of the influenza vaccine you will need for the entire 2011–2012 season. We have received our initial vaccine allocation from CDC and have begun processing orders; we will send partial orders until your entire order has been filled. To date, we have received Fluarix® (0.5 mL prefilled syringes for use in children ≥ 3 years of age), and a small amount of Fluzone® 0.25 mL prefilled syringes (for use in children 6-35 months of age). You will be able to track your influenza vaccine shipments, edit your influenza vaccine order and verify your balance in the Online Registry. If you need assistance with submitting your order or have questions, you can e-mail nycimmunize@health.nyc.gov or call the VFC program at 347-396-2405. We expect to have a sufficient supply of influenza vaccine this year to immunize all of your patients.

For non-VFC eligible children and adults, providers can obtain influenza vaccine by contacting influenza vaccine manufacturers or distributors to obtain vaccine. For a list of vaccine manufacturers and distributors, please visit <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/imm/flu-imm-order-info.pdf>.

Please note that New York State Public Health Law §2112, effective July 1, 2008, prohibits the administration of vaccines containing more than trace amounts of thimerosal to children less than 3 years of age and to women who know they are pregnant. Therefore, remember to order enough of the preservative-free, single-dose preparations of influenza vaccine to immunize all of these patients in your practice. All single-dose vaccine preparations may be used whereas all multi-dose vials of influenza vaccine contain thimerosal. Additional information is available at:
http://www.health.state.ny.us/regulations/public_health_law/section/2112/information_for_physicians/update_to_state_law_restricting_thimerosal.htm

New Formulation Available for Adults

Fluzone® Intradermal influenza vaccine, manufactured by Sanofi Pasteur, is a trivalent inactivated influenza virus vaccine approved for adults aged 18 through 64. Fluzone® Intradermal is administered as a 0.1mL intradermal dose delivered via a single dose, prefilled microinjection syringe.

Contraindications to Vaccination

As per updated recommendation from ACIP, allergy to egg protein is no longer considered a contraindication to vaccination, only a precaution. Patients with a history of hypersensitivity to egg protein should be referred to a healthcare provider familiar with the subject of egg allergy for vaccination.

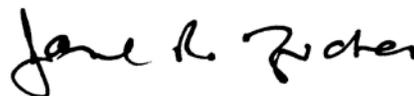
Use only true contraindications when deciding whether to vaccinate a patient with influenza vaccine. The **only** contraindications to influenza vaccination are anaphylactic hypersensitivity to a component of the vaccine (other than egg protein) or history of a severe allergic reaction to a prior dose. Moderate to severe acute illness with or without fever and a history of Guillain-Barré Syndrome within 6 weeks following a previous dose of influenza vaccine are considered precautions to influenza vaccination. A recent survey of healthcare providers revealed many misconceptions regarding contraindications to influenza vaccination. It should be recognized that pregnant females and people with long-term health conditions, including asthma, are at high risk for complications from influenza and **should** be vaccinated with a trivalent inactivated influenza vaccine annually.

Reporting Requirements

Providers must report all doses of vaccine administered to children less than 19 years of age to the Citywide Immunization Registry (CIR). For more information, please visit www.nyc.gov/health/cir. Vaccines administered to adults age 19 years and older may be reported to CIR with documented informed consent. We strongly encourage adult providers to obtain consent from patients and report all administered doses. A sample consent form for individuals 19 years of age and older can be found at http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/cir/consent103mr_1.pdf.

We encourage you to make every effort to vaccinate your patients this year. For further information about influenza, please visit www.nyc.gov/flu. Thank you for helping protect New York City residents from influenza.

Sincerely,



Jane R. Zucker, MD, MSc
Assistant Commissioner
Bureau of Immunization