

Public Health Update

December 2008

National Influenza Vaccination Week

By Lynn Trefren, RN, MSN

National Influenza Vaccination Week, Dec 8-14, is meant to highlight the importance of continuing influenza vaccination efforts in December and the months ahead. It is also a time to review vaccination recommendations. Beginning with the 2008-2009 influenza season, annual vaccination of all children aged 6 months through 18 years is recommended. For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/flu/nivw/index.htm

In the United States, influenza typically occurs during the late fall through early spring seasons. Rates of influenza infection are highest among children, with rates of serious illness and death highest in persons aged ≥ 65 years and children < 2 years. Also at high risk are persons of any age with medical conditions that place them at increased risk for complications from influenza. In an average year in the United States, there are as many as 226,000 hospitalizations and as many as 36,000 deaths from influenza and associated complications. Annual influenza vaccination is the most effective method available for preventing influenza infection. Influenza vaccine can be given to anyone aged ≥ 6 months who has no contraindications to immunization.

Two types of influenza vaccine are available. Trivalent inactivated influenza vaccine (TIV) can be used for any person aged ≥ 6 months, including those with high-risk conditions. Several brands are available with different age indications. Providers should consult the package insert to ensure proper administration. Live, attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV) can be given to healthy, non-pregnant persons aged 2 through 49 years of age. **LAIV should not be given to children under five years of age with possible reactive airway disease, or those who have had recurrent wheezing or a recent wheezing episode.**

Updated Recommendations for Influenza Vaccinations:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), through their Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), provides recommendations annually for control and prevention of influenza. The 2008-2009 influenza season recommendations included these changes or updates:

- Annual vaccination of all children aged 6 months through 4 years (59 months) should continue.
- Children and adolescents at high risk for influenza complications should continue to be a focus of vaccination efforts.
- **Beginning with the 2008-2009 season, annual vaccination of ALL children ages 5 – 18 years is recommended.**
- Either TIV or LAIV can be used for healthy persons aged 2 through 49 years.
- TIV should be given to children with possible reactive airway disease, persons at higher risk for influenza complications due to underlying medical conditions, children aged 6 months through 23 months, and persons aged 50 years and older.



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Vaccine Doses for Children

When immunizing children, providers should be aware that children aged 6 months through 8 years of age who are **receiving influenza vaccine for the first year should receive two doses** of vaccine that are given at least 4 weeks apart. It is now recommended that children who *should have* received two doses of vaccine last year, but who only received one dose last year, should be given two doses of vaccine during this influenza season. Any child who has received influenza vaccine in two previous years needs only one dose per year from this season forward. Children aged 6 through 35 months are given a .25mL dose of TIV. Those aged 3 and older receive a .5mL dose of TIV.

When to Vaccinate

Providers should begin vaccinating their patients as soon as they have their influenza vaccine, and should **continue to offer the vaccine through December and into the following year**. Influenza can peak as early as October, but in reviewing data from the previous twenty years, the peak is most likely to occur in February. Continuing to vaccinate offers protection to patients especially in years with a late disease peak. An additional recommendation from CDC is to continue vaccination efforts as long as influenza is circulating in the community. Vaccination at the end of the season (April and May) may benefit persons like to be traveling to the Southern Hemisphere where influenza will be circulating before the next years vaccine is available, and children younger than 9 years of age who have not gotten their recommended second dose of vaccine.

High Priority Groups for Vaccination

Influenza vaccine should be given to all persons who want to reduce the risk of becoming ill with influenza, and those who want to decrease the risk of transmitting the disease to others. Persons who should be considered target groups for vaccination include:

- Children aged 6 months through 18 years
- Pregnant women
- Persons at risk for medical complications
 - All children aged 6 months through 4 years (59 months)
 - All persons aged 50 years and older
 - Children and adolescents who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy
 - Women who will be pregnant during influenza season
 - Adults and children who have chronic pulmonary (including asthma), cardiovascular (except hypertension), renal, hepatic, hematological, or metabolic disorders (including diabetes)
 - Adults and children who have immunosuppression
 - Adults and children who have a condition that can compromise respiratory function or handling of respiratory secretions, or are at risk of aspiration
 - Residents of nursing homes and other chronic-care facilities
- Persons who live with or care for persons at high risk for influenza-related complications
 - **Health care providers**
 - Household contacts (including other children) of children 59 months of age and younger, and adults aged 50 and older
 - Household contacts of persons at high risk of complications of influenza



Influenza vaccines approved in the United States for the 2008-2009 Season:

<u>Type</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Manufacturer</u>	<u>Age recommendation</u>
TIV	Fluzone	sanofi pasteur	Aged 6 months and older
TIV	Fluvirin	Novartis Vaccine	Aged 4 years and older
TIV	Fluarix	GlaxoSmithKline	Aged 18 years and older
TIV	FluLuval	GlaxoSmithKline	Aged 18 years and older
TIV	Afluria	CSL Biotherapies	Aged 18 years and older
LAIV	Flumist	MedImmune	Healthy, aged 2 through 49 years

References and resources:

ACIP recommendations: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/acip/>

Vaccine information: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/vaccination/>

For more information or questions, please contact:

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Selected Diseases by Date of Report Adams, Arapahoe, and Douglas Counties 2008 Year-to-date Through October

