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 Wheatbelt

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**Temporary Suspension of WA paediatric (6months to 4 years) seasonal influenza vaccine program.**

KEY POINTS

- The WA seasonal influenza vaccination program for under 5 year-old children is temporarily suspended due to an apparent increase in adverse events.
- The national influenza vaccination program, including use of Panvax, is unaffected.
- The under 5 year-old program will recommence when it is deemed safe to do so.



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Health, WA**  
Communicable Disease Control Directorate

22 April 2010

## URGENT ALERT TO ALL GENERAL PRACTITIONERS & IMMUNISATION PROVIDERS

### Temporary suspension of WA paediatric (6 months to 4 years) seasonal influenza vaccine program

#### KEY POINTS

- The WA seasonal influenza vaccination program for under 5 year-old children is temporarily suspended due to an apparent increase in adverse events.
- The national influenza vaccination program, including use of Panvax, is unaffected.
- The under 5 year-old program will recommence when it is deemed safe to do so.

Adverse event reporting currently indicates an increase, relative to previous seasons, in the rate of febrile reactions in young children within 12 hours following receipt of the trivalent seasonal influenza vaccine. Reactions reported commonly include vomiting and fever. More severe fevers have been reported in a small number of cases, with accompanying febrile convulsions.

Hence, a decision has been made to temporarily suspend the WA program for seasonal influenza vaccination in children aged 6 months to 4 years, while evidence on the safety of the vaccine is considered.

Please note the following:

1. This temporary suspension relates only to the free WA program for seasonal influenza vaccine in well children aged 6 months to 4 years. Influenza vaccination should continue for children who are eligible for vaccination under the national program because of an underlying medical condition that puts them at risk of complications of influenza.
2. Parents of young children who have been vaccinated against influenza in the past 12 hours should be advised to treat the child with paracetamol, and to seek medical attention if the child develops a fever that cannot be controlled.
3. Please retain vaccine ordered for the paediatric campaign in your practice refrigerator until further notice.
4. No other vaccines in the childhood vaccine program are affected and these vaccines should be given when due as per routine.
5. Seasonal influenza vaccination for all other age groups should continue as per normal, as should use of the monovalent pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza vaccine (Panvax) for those of any age who wish to be protected.

We regret this interruption to this important vaccination program. Once all the available information has been considered we will advise regarding a resumption of the program.

Dr Paul Armstrong  
Director, Communicable Disease Control Directorate



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Department of **Health, WA**

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## **INFORMATION FOR HEALTH DIRECT AND THE TELEPHONE VACCINE INFORMATION LINE**

### **Temporary suspension of WA paediatric (6 months to 4 years) seasonal influenza vaccine program**

Adverse event reporting currently indicates an increase, compared to previous seasons, in the rate of febrile (fever) reactions in young children within 12 hours following receipt of the trivalent seasonal influenza vaccine. Reactions reported commonly include vomiting and fever. More severe fevers have been reported in a small number of cases, with accompanying febrile convulsions (fever plus seizures).

Hence, a decision has been made to temporarily suspend the WA program for seasonal influenza vaccination in children aged 6 months to 4 years, while evidence on the safety of the vaccine is considered.

#### **Q & A Fact Sheet**

##### **My child received the Influenza today, what should I look for?**

The majority of children who receive the vaccine will have no side effects. Of those children who do experience some reaction, this will mostly be a mild local reaction, sometimes accompanied by a raised temperature.

##### **What do I do if my child does get a raised temperature?**

Parents of young children who have been vaccinated against influenza in the past 12 hours should be advised to treat the child with paracetamol (as per the directions on the box/bottle), and to seek medical attention if the child develops a fever that cannot be controlled.

##### **Should I continue with my child's other vaccination schedule?**

Yes, there is no problem with use of the routine scheduled vaccines for children.

##### **I am an adult or I have a child aged 5 years or more. Is it okay, to get the influenza vaccine?**

Yes, the majority of concerns have been in the under-5 year-old age group, and older children and adults should continue to receive the influenza vaccine

##### **Is it safe for me or my child to have the panvax (H1N1) vaccine?**

Yes, panvax (H1N1) vaccine can still be given to children and adults from six months of age. H1N1 is the predicted strain for this coming influenza season, so it is important to be protected against this strain of influenza.

**Dr Paul Armstrong**  
**Director, Communicable Disease control Directorate**