



UPDATED INFORMATION TO ALL GENERAL PRACTITIONERS & IMMUNISATION PROVIDERS

Influenza Vaccinations for Healthy Children Aged Under 5 Years Remain Suspended

KEY POINTS

- **The influenza vaccine program for healthy children aged under 5 years continues to be suspended until further notice.**
- **If a child is at risk of severe influenza infection, vaccination may be considered, but brands other than Fluvax® and Fluvax Junior® should be used.**
- **Panvax® vaccine continues to be available for anyone aged 6 months and over**
- **The childhood vaccination program for other vaccines, and the seasonal and vaccination programs for other age groups, are unaffected.**

This update follows from the letter you would have received from the Australian Chief Medical Officer on 1 June 2010 regarding this issue. The national investigation into the apparent increase in adverse events in children associated with the trivalent seasonal influenza vaccine is continuing, coordinated by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) and the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing.

To summarise the interim findings released on 1 June, the number of febrile convulsions associated with influenza vaccination in children is elevated compared to previous seasons, and that **this increase is due to the CSL Biotherapies vaccine formulations Fluvax® and Fluvax Junior®**. Although no increase in rates of febrile convulsions have been reported following vaccination with other vaccine brands, too few have yet been given to definitively rule out an association.

Hence, pending final results of these investigations, the recommendation remains that no **child under 5 years who is otherwise well** should receive the trivalent seasonal influenza vaccine.

If a child is at risk of severe influenza infection due to an underlying medical condition, vaccination should be considered, based on a clinical evaluation of the risks and benefits for the individual child and agreement on the best clinical management with the parents. The Influvac® or Vaxigrip® 2010 seasonal vaccines should be used in these circumstances.

No **other vaccines in the childhood vaccine program** are affected and these vaccines should be given when due, as per schedule.

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 (≥ 6 months) who wish to be protected against what is expected to be the dominant influenza strain in 2010.

Other information is available on the Australian Government's Immunise Australia website at: www.immunise.health.gov.au or by phoning the Immunise Australia Call Centre on 1800 671 811.

We once again wish to thank WA immunisation providers for their patience and great help with the investigation over recent weeks, which has been pivotal in reaching key conclusions. We will update you as more information comes to hand.

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