



Oifig Náisiúnta Imdhíonta
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August 2019

To Each Pharmacist

Re: Important News: Seasonal Influenza Campaign 2019/2020

Dear Colleague,

This letter contains important information about the 2019/2020 influenza vaccination campaign.

The World Health Organization has recommended that the seasonal influenza vaccines for the 2019/2020 season (Northern Hemisphere winter) contain:

- an A/Brisbane/02/2018 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus;
- an A/Kansas/14/2017 (H3N2)-like virus;
- a B/Colorado/06/2017-like virus (B/Victoria/2/87 lineage);
- a B/Phuket/3073/2013-like virus (B/Yamagata/16/88 lineage).

Seasonal Influenza campaign 2019/2020

The HSE National Cold Chain Service will provide Quadrivalent Influenza Vaccine (split virion, inactivated) manufactured by Sanofi Pasteur. It comes in pre filled syringes as packs of 10.

Please note the following recommendation from the National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) - these are included in revised chapters of the Immunisation Guidelines:

*Until further evidence emerges, patients on combination checkpoint inhibitors (e.g. ipilimumab plus nivolumab) **should not** receive any influenza vaccines, because of a potential association with immune-related adverse reactions.*

Vaccine ordering

Influenza vaccine can be ordered online from the HSE National Cold Chain Service (NCCS). Further details will be sent to you regarding the timelines for vaccine ordering and delivery by the NCCS.

- Patient held vaccination record cards will be sent with your vaccine delivery which should be completed and given to your patients after vaccination.
- New posters for display and a supply of leaflets for your patients are enclosed.

Seasonal influenza vaccine is provided free for all those aged 65 years and over, pregnant women, those in at-risk groups, and healthcare workers (including pharmacy staff) as outlined in the attachment with this letter. Those that do not have a medical card or GP visit card will be liable for a fee set by you. Claims for the vaccination of medical card or GP visit card holders in the groups as per the attachment can be made through the PCRS.

The seasonal influenza vaccine supplied by the **HSE National Cold Chain Service** is specifically for those in the at-risk groups. Vaccine for individuals outside of these groups can be obtained through the private market.

Actions required by you:

1. Use the returns service provided by the HSE National Cold Chain Service for any remaining influenza vaccine from 2018/2019 season.
2. If you wish to order more information materials please visit www.healthpromotion.ie and order materials from there. Please set up a medical professional account if you do not have one already to order larger quantities of leaflets and posters.

Maximising uptake among at-risk groups and front-line health care workers is critical in the prevention of morbidity and mortality and your support in this regard is highly appreciated. In particular, please encourage your patients in at-risk groups and pregnant patients to be vaccinated to protect them and their infants.

If you require any further information or have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Kevin Kelleher
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AT RISK GROUPS ELIGIBLE TO BE VACCINATED BY PHARMACISTS

AT THE PREMISES OF A RETAIL PHARMACY BUSINESS

- **Persons aged 65 and older**
- **Pregnant women (vaccine can be given at any stage of pregnancy)**
- **Those aged 10 years and older with a long-term health condition such as:**
 - Chronic heart disease including acute coronary syndrome
 - Chronic liver disease
 - Chronic neurological disease including multiple sclerosis, hereditary and degenerative disorders of the central nervous system
 - Chronic renal failure
 - Cancer patients
 - Chronic respiratory disease, including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, cystic fibrosis, moderate or severe asthma or bronchopulmonary dysplasia
 - Diabetes mellitus
 - Down syndrome
 - Haemoglobinopathies
 - Immunosuppression due to disease or treatment, including asplenia or splenic dysfunction and cancer patients
 - Morbid obesity, i.e. body mass index of 40 or over
- **Children aged 10 years and older**
 - with any condition (e.g. cognitive dysfunction, spinal cord injury, seizure disorder, or other neuromuscular disorder) that can compromise respiratory function especially those attending special schools/day centres
 - with moderate to severe neurodevelopmental disorders such as cerebral palsy and intellectual disability
 - on long-term aspirin therapy (because of the risk of Reyes syndrome)
- **Healthcare workers including all General Practice staff**
- **Residents of nursing homes and other long stay institutions**
- **Carers and household contacts aged 10 years and older of people with increased medical risk**
- **People aged 10 years and older with regular contact with pigs, poultry or water fowl**