



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

August 2012

To: Each General Practitioner

IMPORTANT NEWS

Re: Influenza Vaccination Campaign 2012/2013

Dear Doctor,

This letter contains important information about the 2012/2013 influenza vaccination campaign.

The World Health Organization has recommended that the seasonal influenza vaccines for the 2012/2013 season (Northern Hemisphere winter) contain:

- an A/California/7/2009 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus;
- an A/Victoria/361/2011 (H3N2)-like virus;
- a B/Wisconsin/1/2010-like virus

For 2012/2013

- ◆ There are no changes to the recommended at risk groups for the 2012/2013 HSE Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Campaign as outlined overleaf.
- ◆ Only one seasonal influenza vaccine will be in use - **Inactivated Influenza Vaccine (Split Virion) BP** manufactured by **Sanofi Pasteur MSD** which comes in packs of 10 pre filled syringes.
- ◆ There will be two additional deliveries to all General Practitioners to facilitate supply of influenza vaccine.
- ◆ 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 will be sent to you shortly.

Seasonal influenza vaccine is provided free for all those aged 65 years and over, those in at-risk groups and healthcare staff (as outlined in the attachment). 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.

There is no change in the recommendations for pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine, PPV23 (Pneumovax) i.e. for those aged 65 years and over and those in specific at risk groups.

A **once only** PPV23 booster vaccination is recommended 5 years after the first vaccination for those

- aged 65 years and older if they received vaccine more than 5 years before and were less than 65 years of age at the time of the first dose,
- whose antibody levels are likely to decline rapidly e.g. asplenia, splenic dysfunction, immunosuppression, renal transplant or chronic renal disease.

Additional PPV 23 booster vaccinations are not routinely recommended. This is outlined in the algorithm you received last year and which will be reprinted in the 2012/2013 Frequently Asked Questions booklet.

Further information about the influenza and pneumococcal vaccination campaign including a frequently asked questions section about the enclosed recommendations is available on the National Immunisation website www.immunisation.ie and will be sent to you with the information materials.

Additional details can be found in the August 2012 Influenza chapter of the Immunisation Guidelines for Ireland <http://www.immunisation.ie/en/HealthcareProfessionals/ImmunisationGuidelines2008/>

Actions required by you:

1. Place your order for Seasonal Influenza (*Inactivated Influenza Vaccine (Split Virion) BP*) and Pneumococcal Polysaccharide vaccines PPV23 (*Pneumovax*) for this year's campaign with the HSE National Cold Chain Service.
2. Use the returns service provided by the HSE National Cold Chain Service for any remaining 2011/2012 seasonal influenza vaccine.

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.

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

Yours sincerely,



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Health Service Executive

The 2012/2013 seasonal influenza vaccine is strongly recommended for

- Persons aged 65 years and older
- Those over 6 months of age with a long-term health condition such as
 - Chronic respiratory disease, including cystic fibrosis, moderate or severe asthma or bronchopulmonary dysplasia
 - Chronic heart disease
 - Diabetes mellitus
 - Haemoglobinopathies
 - Chronic renal failure
 - Chronic liver disease
 - Chronic neurological disease including multiple sclerosis, hereditary and degenerative disorders of the central nervous system
 - Immunosuppression due to disease or treatment, including asplenia or splenic dysfunction
 - Those with morbid obesity i.e. body mass index over 40
- Children over 6 months of age
 - 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
 - on long-term aspirin therapy (because of the risk of Reyes Syndrome)
- Pregnant women (vaccine can be given at any stage of pregnancy)
- Healthcare workers
- Residents of nursing homes and other long stay institutions
- Carers
- People with regular contact with pigs, poultry or water fowl