



Dear Health Care Provider

PAEDIATRIC INFLUENZA STUDY FOR CHILDREN IN METROPOLITAN AREA AGED 6 MONTHS TO 4 YEARS

1. Background

Recent data from overseas have highlighted the poorly recognised, heavy burden of disease children under 5 suffer from influenza infection. Not only is the illness more severe and more likely to result in hospitalisation but children shed virus longer and transmit infection to other age groups. The US CDC has just revised its recommendations and now says all children up to 18 years should have influenza vaccination. They also quoted a 75 per cent vaccine efficacy in the younger age groups. In order for national guidelines to be reviewed in Australia, local data are needed and the influenza vaccine efficacy study in Perth will collect these.

2. The Vaccine

All children in the metropolitan area aged 6 months to 4 years will be offered free influenza vaccine this year.

The products available will be:

- *Vaxigrip Junior* — Sanofi Pasteur — in a 0.25 mL pre-filled syringe.
- *Vaxigrip* — Sanofi Pasteur — in a 0.5 mL pre-filled syringe.
- *Fluvax Junior* — CSL — in a 0.25 mL pre-filled syringe.
- *Fluvax* — CSL — in a 0.5 mL pre-filled syringe.

As not all vaccine products will be available at the beginning of the program some GPs may initially be only allocated 0.5 mL pre-filled syringes. If this occurs to your practice please use these to give 0.25 mL doses where required and then discard the remaining vaccine in the syringe.

3. Ordering

- **Eligibility criteria: Children born from 1 April 2003.**
- **Orders to be faxed to CDCD for processing and not to CSL.**
- Orders can be placed now, however they will not be filled until 1 April 2008.
- A maximum of 50 doses allowed for the first order.

- If you are a large practice and feel you require more for your first order please contact the 9388 4868 to authorise this.
- Fax vaccine order forms to CDCD, WA Department of Health on 9388 4820. For vaccine order enquiries telephone CDCD on 9388 4868.
- Attached is an order form.
- Only call CDCD if you have not received your order by 8 April 2008.
- It is recommended to order weekly. I encourage you to not over-order — as immunisation fridges will be very full, and you need to minimise wastage due to cold chain failure. If additional orders are required costs will be covered by CDCD.
- To acquire further vaccine you need to provide data on the order form including name, date of birth/dose, number/date vaccine given.

FIRST NAME	SURNAME	DATE OF BIRTH	DOSE NUMBER	DATE GIVEN
	/...../.....	1 ST <input type="checkbox"/> 2 ND <input type="checkbox"/>/...../.....

4. Recommended Doses of Influenza Vaccine

Two doses of influenza vaccine, at least one month apart, are recommended for children aged 9 years of age or less, who are receiving influenza vaccine for the first time.*** There is an online revised paediatric dosage table (3.9.1 — page 163) in Chapter 3.9 Influenza, 9th Edition, Australian Immunisation Handbook, which was released in August 2007, following endorsement by the NHMRC. This is at the Immunise Australia Website: <http://immunise.health.gov.au> — under “What’s New”.

Age	Dose	Number of Doses (first immunisation)	Number of Doses ** (subsequent years)
6 months – < 3 years	0.25 mL	2*	1
3 years – < 5 years	0.5 mL	2*	1

* Two doses at least 1 month apart are recommended for children aged ≤ 9 years receiving influenza vaccine for the first time. The same vial should not be reused.

** If a child ≤ 9 years of age receiving influenza vaccine for the first time inadvertently does not receive the second dose, they need 2 doses administered the next year.

*** Influenza vaccine is administered by either IM or SC injection. The IM route causes fewer local reactions and is preferred.

5. Vaccine Recommendations for Children Ineligible for the Free Study

The following groups should also receive influenza vaccination:

- Children 5 years and older with chronic cardiac conditions, chronic suppurative lung disease and chronic illnesses requiring regular hospitalisation and intervention.
- Caregivers and household contacts of high risk children.
- Children under the age of 5 years with underlying medical conditions predisposing them to invasive pneumococcal disease are also recommended to receive pneumococcal vaccination.
- For those outside the eligibility criteria influenza vaccine can be purchased on prescription.

6. Information

1. Information regarding influenza vaccine can be found online in Chapter 3.9, Influenza, 9th Edition, Australian Immunisation Handbook. If you do not have access to the internet, information can be found in your hard copy *Australian Immunisation Handbook, 8th Edition, 2003*.
2. The WA Department of Health Immunisation Website at www.public.health.wa.gov.au, under *information for health providers, immunisation*.
3. Alternatively contact the Central Immunisation Clinic on 9321 1312.

7. Efficacy Study Surveillance

Detailed information about case definitions, required swabs for testing and the surveillance protocol will be mailed to GPs closer to the influenza season.

8. Attached

1. Paediatric influenza study vaccine order form.
2. Influenza vaccine fact sheet for the public, also available online at the above website.



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