SEASONAL INFLUENZA VACCINATION 2015

GENERAL PRACTITIONERS
and ABORIGINAL MEDICAL SERVICES

Please distribute this information to all doctors and staff in your practice

1. Fluvax® (bioCSL) MUST NOT be given to children less than 5 years of age.
2. All influenza vaccine deliveries will include either Vaxigrip® or Fluarix®. Use these vaccines for children 6 months to less than 9 years of age and follow the paediatric dosing instructions provided.
3. Keep enough Vaxigrip® or Fluarix® in your fridge at all times for eligible children.

Delay in vaccine availability

- The National Seasonal Influenza Immunisation Program for 2015 will commence on 20 April 2015. This is later than the usual start date, due to a change in two strains from the 2014 vaccine. This double-strain change, which is an unusual occurrence, has caused manufacturing delays. The delay will not affect vaccine supply volumes, and no vaccine shortages are anticipated.

Vaccine eligibility

- The following groups are eligible for free seasonal influenza vaccine:
  o all people aged 65 years and over
  o all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged six months to less than 5 years (new)
  o all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over
  o all pregnant women
  o people aged 6 months and over with medical conditions predisposing to severe influenza (see the Australian Immunisation Handbook, 10th edition, pp.252-254)

Recommendations for children

- Two doses of influenza vaccine at least one month apart are recommended for children aged 6 months to less than 9 years who are receiving influenza vaccine for the first time.
- Fluvax® MUST NOT be used in children less than 5 years of age and should not be used for children aged 5 years to less than 9 years. Vaxigrip® or Fluarix® will be provided for use in children less than 9 years of age (see the Australian Immunisation Handbook, pp.247-248).
- Report all doses in children under 7 years of age to the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register

Ordering influenza vaccine

- Influenza vaccine may be ordered now online at: https://nsw.csldirect.com.au/
- Deliveries of influenza vaccine will commence when vaccine becomes available.
- Ring the State Vaccine Centre on 1300 656 132 if you have not already registered for online ordering.

Yours sincerely

Dr Vicky Sheppeard
A/Director, Health Protection NSW
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