

Dear Colleague

SCOTTISH CHILDHOOD FLU VACCINATION PROGRAMME 2015-16

1. This year's childhood flu vaccination programme will offer vaccination to the same groups as last year. Specifically:

- All children aged 2-5* (not yet at school) through GP practices (**children must be aged 2 or above on 1 September 2015*); and
- All primary school aged children (primary 1 to primary 7) at school.

The only significant change to the programme this year is that any primary school child in Scotland who misses their school session (for whatever reason) can make an appointment with their GP practice to be immunised. This has been agreed as part of the DES with GPs for this season. Such appointments should only be made after the school vaccination session has passed, and children will not be called for such vaccination - it will be offered only if they present.

2. With the exception of children in clinical risk groups at increased risk of complications, children in secondary school are not currently included in the programme.

Vaccine

3. There has been no change to the vaccine of choice for the majority of children. They will again be offered Fluenz Tetra® this year – a live attenuated nasal flu vaccine (LAIV). Children who have a contraindication to LAIV should be offered inactivated vaccine if appropriate. Please see Annex A for more details on where to access information on contraindications and precautions to Fluenz Tetra®. See Annex B for a table of vaccines.

**From the Chief Medical Officer
Chief Nursing Officer
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer**
Dr Catherine Calderwood
Professor Fiona McQueen
Dr Rose Marie Parr

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For action

Chief Executives, NHS Boards
Medical Directors, NHS Boards
Nurse Directors, NHS Boards
Directors of Pharmacy
Directors of Public Health
General Practitioners
Practice Nurses
School Nurses
Immunisation Co-ordinators
CPHMs
Scottish Prison Service
Scottish Ambulance Service
Occupational Health Leads

For information

Infectious Disease Consultants
Consultant Paediatricians
Consultant Physicians
Consultants in Dental Public Health
Dental Lead Officers
Health Protection Scotland
Chief Executive, NHS Health Scotland
NHS 24
Health Visitors
Scottish General Practitioners Committee
Local Authority Chief Executives and
Directors of Education
Proprietors of Independent Schools
Scottish Council of Independent Schools

Further Enquiries

Policy Issues

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Green Book

4. The Green Book chapter has been updated and contains detailed advice on the vaccine and associated contraindications. Here is a link to the green book <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/influenza-the-green-book-chapter-19>.

The key changes this year that apply to children are the advice on egg allergy and asthma, as follows:

5. The JCVI have now recommended that Fluenz Tetra® can safely be given to children with an **egg allergy**, unless they have had a life-threatening reaction to eggs (or products containing eggs) that required intensive care. (see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/influenza-the-green-book-chapter-19>)

6. Fluenz Tetra® may not be suitable for some children with severe asthma. It is not recommended for children who are currently taking oral steroids or who have been prescribed oral steroids in the last 14 days. There is limited safety data on children who are currently taking a high dose of an inhaled steroid – Budesonide >800 mcg/day or equivalent (e.g. Fluticasone >500 mcgs/day) – such children should only be given LAIV on the advice of their specialist. As these children are a defined risk group for influenza, those who cannot receive LAIV should receive an inactivated influenza vaccine.

7. Vaccination with Fluenz Tetra ®should be deferred in children with a history of active wheezing in the past 72 hours or those who have increased their use of bronchodilators in the previous 72 hours. If their condition has not improved after a further 72 hours then, to avoid delaying protection in this high risk group, these children should be offered an inactivated influenza vaccine.

8. Colleagues should ensure they are familiar with the advice in contraindications and precautions sections in the Green Book influenza chapter before vaccinating patients: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/influenza-the-green-book-chapter-19>

9. Please note that, as a live, attenuated vaccine, Fluenz Tetra® is contraindicated in some patients.

Alternative Vaccines for Children in whom Fluenz Tetra® is unsuitable

10. For the small proportion of children for whom Fluenz Tetra® is contraindicated, a suitable inactivated injectable flu vaccine should be considered:-

- If these children are aged less than nine years and have not received flu vaccine before, two doses of a licensed injectable inactivated vaccine should be offered (given at least four weeks apart).
- Children aged from three years for whom Fluenz Tetra® is not suitable should be offered **quadrivalent inactivated vaccine**. The quadrivalent vaccine has two influenza B strains and therefore may provide better protection against the circulating B strain(s) than trivalent inactivated influenza vaccines.

- Children aged from six months to under two years in “at-risk” groups who are not included in the extension programme should be offered a **trivalent inactivated vaccine** licensed for their age.
- Children from age two years to under three years for whom Fluenz Tetra® is not suitable should be offered a **trivalent inactivated vaccine** licensed for their age.
- Young people at secondary school and those who have left school up to age 18 in “at-risk” groups who are not included in the extension programme should be offered **quadrivalent inactivated vaccine**.

11. Some inactivated flu vaccines are restricted to use in particular age groups. Practitioners must be familiar and refer to the marketing authorisation holder’s Summary of Product Characteristics (SPC) for the particular brand when administering vaccines.

12. Fluenz Tetra® has a shorter shelf life (18 weeks) than other influenza vaccines. The expiry date on the nasal spray applicator should always be checked before use. Vaccine has been ordered to cover the period over which historically the flu vaccine has been used, extending from September to mid-December. It is likely that most of the Fluenz Tetra® will have expired by the end of December 2015. In light of this it will be important to ensure that efforts are made to vaccinate children before the Christmas holidays.

Uptake Rates in 2014-15

13. These are the provisional uptake rates and aspirational targets for the 2014-15 programme.

	Uptake	Target
2-5 year olds (not yet at school) – vaccinated at GP practice	56.4%	60%
School children (Primary 1 – Primary 7) – vaccinated at school	71.8%	75%

The targets for this coming year’s programme (2015-16) have been agreed as:

- **65%** uptake for the 2-5 year olds (not yet at school) being offered immunisation at GP practice
- **75%** uptake for the primary school aged children being offered immunisation in school

Other Issues

14. General information on the topics listed below can be found in earlier communications on this vaccination programme (see [http://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/cmo/CMO\(2014\)13.pdf](http://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/cmo/CMO(2014)13.pdf)) These are:

- Storage
- Vaccine Stock Management
- Reporting of Adverse Events
- Monitoring Vaccine Uptake: Data Extraction
- Patient Group Directions (PGD's are available on the Health Protection Scotland website at <http://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/immvax/pgd.aspx>)

Contractual Arrangements

15. The Influenza and Pneumococcal DES has been updated to reflect the national arrangements agreed for children who miss their school session (see paragraph 1 above). This will be available on SHOW once published. See <http://www.show.scot.nhs.uk/publications/>)

16. **Annex A** to this letter provides more detailed arrangements on the cohorts to be vaccinated by GPs and via the schools programme. **Annex B** provides details on communications arrangements for this year.

Action

17. NHS Boards, including their primary care teams, and GP practices are asked to note the arrangements outlined in this letter.

18. We are grateful for the ongoing support of all staff in working together to implement this significant public health programme. Please see Annex A for further information.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Calderwood
Chief Medical Officer

Fiona McQueen
Chief Nursing Officer

Rose Marie Parr
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer

Children to be Vaccinated by GP Practices

- **Children aged under two years of age with “at-risk” conditions.** GP practices continue to be responsible for vaccinating “at-risk” children aged six months to less than two years. GP practices should continue to make their usual arrangements for vaccinating those children, including call and recall.
- **All children aged two to five years including “at-risk” children in this age group who are not yet at school .** GP practices will receive a list of eligible pre-school children from SIRS. GP practices can either mark the SIRS list or return a list of children vaccinated which includes their CHI numbers and addresses to SIRS. There is a central invitation being issued for all pre-school children aged 2 and above this year inviting parents to make an appointment with their GP
- **Secondary school aged children and those who have left school up to age 18 years** GPs continue to be responsible for vaccinating all “at-risk” children who are not receiving vaccine in school this year. GPs should continue to make their usual arrangements for those children, including call and recall.
- A small number of children offered one dose of vaccine in primary school will require a second dose and this should be provided by GPs.

Children born between 1 March 2003 and 28 February 2004 will normally enter Secondary one in 2015-16.

National mop up arrangements (in GP Practices)

- NHS Boards are only required to offer one vaccination slot in primary schools. This means that children absent from school on that day (for whatever reason) will not receive the vaccine. Those children should make an appointment with their GP to receive the vaccination (as set out in the national DES arrangements this year). Such appointments should only be made after the school vaccination session has passed and children will not be called – it will be offered only if they present. GPs will also be able to offer vaccination to children who do not attend school for whatever reason (home-schooled, travelling community).

Children to be vaccinated by NHS Boards

All children in Primary School

NHS Boards are responsible for arrangements for vaccination of all primary school aged children this coming winter. Scottish Government policy is that all primary school children (including “at-risk” children) should be offered vaccination in school whether they require the nasal vaccine or an injectable vaccine. However, it is recognised that not all Boards may wish to vaccinate children in schools who require an injectable flu vaccine until the programme is more fully established (and some NHS Boards may need support with vaccinating “at-risk” children early in the flu season to avoid “at-risk” children waiting).

Communication Materials

1. A central invitation letter and leaflet will be issued to all eligible pre-school children during the last week of September. TV and radio advertising will be timed around parents receiving this communication, which will invite them to make an appointment at the GP practice. Posters, leaflets and other support materials will also be distributed to all GP practices. The public should be signposted to www.immunisationscotland.org.uk/childflu for up to date information on the programme.
2. For NHS Boards/schools programme - Consent packs will be distributed to local schools to be sent home in school bags. These packs will include a letter and leaflet for parents of primary school children as well as a consent form. To support the programme in schools, NHS Health Scotland have produced a support pack that will include briefing sheets for education staff, stickers and a DVD that can be shown to children in advance of vaccination sessions. These packs will be delivered to all primary schools for the attention of the Head Teacher during August.
3. NHS Education for Scotland in partnership with Health Protection Scotland has produced educational resources for registered healthcare practitioners. These resources will shortly be available at: <http://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/education-and-training/by-theme-initiative/public-health/health-protection/seasonal-flu.aspx>.

Further Information

4. Full information on vaccine administration, contraindications and precautions will be available in the updated influenza chapter of the Green Book. It should be noted that Fluenz Tetra® is a live attenuated vaccine and therefore is contraindicated for some patients. It is important that the full Green Book guidance is always reviewed carefully in addition to the information in this letter. The Green Book is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/influenza-the-green-book-chapter-19>

Vaccines

Vaccine	Type	Age Indication	Cohort
Fluenz Tetra®, AstraZeneca UK Ltd	Quadrivalent live attenuated	From 24 months to less than 18 years of age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All children aged 2- 5 (not yet at school) All primary school aged children in primary 1 to primary 7 All children from 2 years to less than 18 years old in clinical risk groups
Fluarix Tetra®, GSK	Quadrivalent inactivated	From 3 years of age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children in the above cohorts aged from 3 years who are contraindicated for Fluenz Tetra®
Inactivated influenza vaccine (split virion) BP®, Sanofi Pasteur MSD	Trivalent inactivated	From 6 months of age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children aged 6 months to less than 2 years in a clinical risk group Children aged less than 3 years who are contraindicated for Fluenz Tetra®