



**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE**
Thomas Farley, MD, MPH
Commissioner

**** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO ALL MEDICAL, NURSING, PHARMACY AND OFFICE STAFF ****

Jane R. Zucker, MD, MSc
Assistant Commissioner
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March 8, 2010

Bureau of Immunization
2 Lafayette Street, 19th Fl.
New York, NY 10007

Dear Colleague:

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices has recently voted to recommend universal seasonal influenza vaccination. This recommendation means that beginning in the 2010-2011 flu season, all persons 6 months and older, including all adults, should receive annual influenza vaccination. This universal vaccination recommendation should help make it easier to decide who to vaccinate, help to increase vaccine uptake, and reduce both disease in individuals and influenza virus spread in our communities. Only those with severe egg allergy or other known valid medical contraindications to influenza vaccine should not be vaccinated.

We ask you to review the number of doses of seasonal influenza vaccine you will need for your practice and to plan accordingly. For practitioners who purchase vaccine, you will need to order the 2010-2011 influenza vaccine directly from the manufacturers or distributors. We encourage you to place your order as soon as possible. Last year, many providers who did not pre-book seasonal influenza vaccine were unable to obtain vaccine, received a partial order, or received their supply late in the season. Vaccine will be available for order through the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program for use in eligible children and teens.

For the 2010-2011 influenza season, there will be only one seasonal, trivalent influenza vaccine, available from several manufacturers. The vaccine includes the predominant strains of influenza virus circulating, including the 2009 pandemic H1N1 strain. Any remaining monovalent H1N1 vaccine should not be used for the 2010-2011 flu season. New to the market is a recently licensed high-dose product, containing four times the amount of influenza antigen compared to other inactivated seasonal influenza vaccines, for use in persons 65 years and older. This vaccine produces a better immune response as compared to standard dose influenza vaccine in seniors.

The DOHMH applauds your ongoing efforts in vaccinating your patients against influenza, and encourages you to continue 2009-2010 flu vaccination well into the spring months. In New York City and worldwide, influenza viruses, including H1N1 and B, are still circulating. Influenza transmission typically lasts through May; last year the 2009 H1N1 virus spread throughout the summer months. The DOHMH has an ample supply of novel H1N1 vaccine. Continue to place orders at nycflu@health.nyc.gov so you can continue to vaccinate your patients. It is not too late to vaccinate!

For information on influenza vaccination and treatment guidelines, vaccine supply, as well as educational materials for your patients, visit www.nyc.gov/flu. The new ACIP recommendations are available at www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/provisional/downloads/flu-vac-mar-2010-508.pdf.

Thank you for protecting your patients from influenza.

Sincerely,

Jane R. Zucker, MD, MSc
Assistant Commissioner