



October 24, 2023

Dear Colleague:

This is an update on influenza activity and the availability and distribution of seasonal flu vaccine. Influenza activity is currently low in the U.S., as it is in New York City (NYC), though flu activity often begins to increase in October. Vaccine manufacturers have projected they would provide as many as 156.2 million to 170 million doses of flu vaccine nationally for use during the 2023-2024 season, with 136.94 million of these doses already having been distributed. Flu vaccination should be well underway at your facility. If you are not offering flu vaccine at your facility, be sure to refer your patients to <https://vaccinefinder.nyc.gov/> so they can identify flu vaccine locations.

In NYC, we have been allocated almost all of the flu vaccine that we pre-booked for the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program, and 50% of this vaccine has been shipped to facilities. Facilities will receive partial shipments until their orders have been completely shipped. All products are in good supply.

As of October 20, 2023, 91% of VFC providers have ordered flu vaccine. All VFC providers are expected to offer flu vaccine to their patients. VFC providers who have not yet ordered flu vaccine should do so immediately. If you need help with your VFC flu order, please call (347) 396-2489. Please do not allow your facility to run out of vaccine; if you need vaccine, contact us before your inventory gets too low.

**Flu vaccination is lagging behind what we saw at the same time last year.** Since the beginning of the 2023-2024 influenza season, 3.6% fewer NYC children aged 6 months to 18 years have received at least one flu vaccine dose than received one during the same time period in the 2022-2023 season. Likewise, there has been a 15.0% decrease in the number of adults aged 19 years and older that have received at least one flu vaccine dose (that was reported to the Citywide Immunization Registry [CIR]) compared to the same period in the 2022-2023 season. Remember to use evidence-based strategies to increase flu vaccination at your facility, including identifying and contacting unvaccinated patients to make an appointment and use of standing orders. Tools are available [here](#) in the CIR Online Registry to help with identifying and sending text messages to your patients.

The Health Department's 2023-2024 [City Health Information \(CHI\) on influenza prevention and control](#) is now available. This annual document includes detailed information on the flu vaccine, including immunization products, vaccine recommendations, ways to improve your vaccination rates, and what to tell patients about vaccine safety.

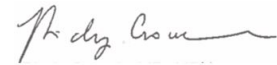
COVID-19 vaccine and the flu vaccine can be administered at the same visit. If your patients have not received their recommended COVID-19 vaccine, they should get it as soon as possible. Currently, only 316 of 1,236 VFC-enrolled providers have ordered COVID-19 vaccine. COVID-19 vaccine is a vaccine approved by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), and all health care providers who administer immunizations to children should be ordering it. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recommended one dose of the updated 2023-2024 formula of Pfizer-BioNTech's and Moderna's COVID-19 vaccines targeting the Omicron variant XBB.1.5 for most individuals. For those individuals ages 12 years and older wishing to receive the Novavax vaccine, CDC recommends

one dose of the updated 2023-2024 formula of the Novavax vaccine for those age  $\geq 12$  years, unless they were not previously vaccinated (and are therefore recommended to get 2 doses of the Novavax product). See [Interim Clinical Considerations and COVID-19 Vaccine Information for Providers](#) for further details. If you do not have vaccine at your facility, facilities with the updated 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine can be found at <https://vaccinefinder.nyc.gov/>. This includes locations providing no-cost COVID-19 vaccination for underinsured and uninsured adults.

As has been the case for the past few years, all children six months through 59 months of age enrolled in NYC Article 47 & 43 regulated pre-kindergarten programs (Child Care, Head Start, Nursery or Pre-K) must receive one dose of flu vaccine between July 1<sup>st</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year. Although some children may need a second dose in order to comply with ACIP recommendations, that second dose is not required for school attendance.

For questions on flu vaccine, other than those pertaining to your VFC order, please call (347) 396-2400 or email [nycimmunize@health.nyc.gov](mailto:nycimmunize@health.nyc.gov). We thank you for your continuing efforts at protecting NYC residents from influenza.

Sincerely,



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