

January 7th 2011

To: Each General Practitioner

IMPORTANT NEWS
Re: Influenza Vaccine Supplies 2011

Dear Doctor,

This letter contains important information about the delivery of influenza vaccines to general practitioners. The increasing levels of flu illness have led to a considerable demand for vaccine deliveries and a resulting pressure on vaccine supply. The HSE has received an additional 30,000 vaccines and has ordered further supplies which will be delivered in the next two weeks.

The HSE National Cold Chain Service is reactivating additional deliveries to all sites to ensure that those that have placed an order by close of business today will receive their order within the next two weeks. In addition ALL sites will receive a box of 500 doses of Pandemrix (pandemic H1N1) vaccine (this includes sites that have not placed an order for flu vaccine) as well as needles and syringes. This vaccine will be delivered in the next two weeks.

**For those in the at risk groups overleaf who have not already had seasonal influenza vaccine
If you have limited stocks of seasonal flu vaccine:**

Seasonal flu vaccine should be prioritised for

- pregnant women
- children aged 6 months to 18 years in the medically at risk groups

All others in the at risk groups should be given a dose of Pandemrix regardless of whether they previously received pandemic vaccine in 2009/2010.

If you do not have stocks of seasonal flu vaccine:

A dose of Pandemrix should be given to all those in the at risk groups regardless of whether they previously received this in 2009/2010.

All those given Pandemrix will require a further dose of seasonal flu vaccine three weeks later.

Seasonal influenza and pandemic vaccine is provided free for all those overleaf. Claims for the vaccination of medical card or GP visit card holders of the groups outlined above can be made through the PCRS. The fee will be the same regardless of whether seasonal or pandemic vaccine is given. Those that do not have a medical card or GP visit card will be liable for your consultation fee for either vaccine.

Influenza vaccines supplied by the HSE National Cold Chain Service is specifically for those in the at risk groups. Vaccine for individuals outside of these groups can be obtained through the private market.

Please place your order with the HSE National Cold Chain Service if you require any further supplies of seasonal flu vaccine.

Further information about influenza vaccines including the administration of Pandemrix is available at www.immunisation.ie and will be sent to you with the vaccine delivery. If you require any further information or have any queries please contact the HSE National Immunisation Office at 01 867 6108.

Yours sincerely



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Recommendations for seasonal influenza vaccine 2010/2011

The 2010/2011 seasonal influenza vaccine is strongly recommended for

- all those aged 65 years and older
- adults and children over 6 months of age with any of the following
 - chronic illness requiring regular follow up (e.g. chronic respiratory disease including cystic fibrosis, moderate or severe asthma, chronic heart disease, chronic neurological disease, diabetes mellitus, **chronic liver disease, chronic neurological disease including multiple sclerosis, hereditary and degenerative disorders of the central nervous system** etc)
 - those who are immunosuppressed due to disease or treatment including those with missing or non functioning spleens
- children and teenagers on long-term aspirin therapy
- children with any condition (e.g. cognitive dysfunction, spinal cord injury, seizure disorder, or other neuromuscular disorder) that can compromise respiratory function **especially those attending special schools/ day centres**
- **those with morbid obesity i.e. Body Mass Index over 40**
- residents of nursing homes, old peoples' homes and other long stay facilities
- healthcare staff
- carers who have direct patient contact
- pregnant women with chronic medical conditions requiring regular follow up or who are immunocompromised due to disease or treatment at any stage of pregnancy
- **ALL pregnant women at any stage of pregnancy and up to 6 weeks post partum who are not in a medically at risk group and who have not already received pandemic (H1N1) 2009 vaccine**
- **people who have close, regular contact with pigs, poultry or water fowl**

BOLD indicates new groups for 2010/2011