



A year to remember, a fond farewell and a seasonal greeting

This year has probably been the busiest twelve months that any of us in the fields of vaccination and immunisation can remember. Three new vaccination programmes have been introduced – rotavirus for babies, shingles for older people and flu for healthy children - and one rescheduled - MenC. This, combined with all the organisational and population changes, as well as maintaining the routine childhood and other vaccination programmes, has put us all under unprecedented pressure. And yet, we have delivered and all the indications are that the programmes have been well received and vaccine uptake is already at encouraging levels.

This is to the immense credit of all involved, from the members of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation, through to the national policy makers and operational leads (the scientists, the programme managers, the vaccine supply team, the communicators, the surveillance officers etc.), and the local health professionals (the area teams, the commissioners, the GPs, health visitors, the school nurses, and midwives) and their support teams.

So it's fitting, in a way, that we say good-bye to Professor David Salisbury who is retiring this year as Director of Immunisation at the Department of Health where, over the last two decades, he has overseen the introduction of these programmes and about a dozen others. His legacy is the tens of thousands of lives saved and the suffering avoided. Very few of the beneficiaries will realise it, of course. But that's the nature of preventative medicine – you only appreciate it when it's no longer there.

Finally, we would like to wish all our readers and all those who have helped deliver a record-breaking year of vaccine introductions, a very merry Christmas and a happy new year. Let's hope we soon begin to see the results of our endeavours – the flat-lining of the graph on page 330 at [web link 1](#) would be a wonderful first Christmas present for any baby born since the rotavirus vaccination began.

Immunisation news

HPV vaccine uptake and its impact on women's health

The high coverage of HPV vaccine among young women is already having a positive effect on their health with a marked reduction in infections caused by HPV types 16 and 18 as compared to the levels before the vaccination programme started. For full details of this very encouraging story see [web link 2](#).

Keeping up to date with vaccine uptake

For the latest data on the uptake of flu, HPV, and pertussis in pregnant women vaccines, see [web link 3](#). For the latest quarterly COVER data for routine childhood immunisations evaluated at one, two and five years of age, see [web link 11](#).

Low flu levels provide an excellent opportunity to vaccinate those still at risk

The low levels of influenza-like illnesses currently circulating provide an opportunity to vaccinate all those at-risk individuals and others who are yet to have their vaccinations.

Uptake levels are around those at the same time last year so there are still large numbers of people who are not protected. Please make sure you use the remaining time available to call or recall all those who haven't yet made an appointment for their flu vaccination ensuring they don't miss the opportunity to be protected against flu.

In particular, nurses and midwives are encouraged to ensure that pregnant women have had their vaccinations because catching flu in pregnancy can be very serious for both mother and baby.

Flu vaccination programme publicity

Since the launch of the marketing campaign in October, there has been a range of communication activities:

- Publicity in the press, magazines, radio, digital search, and pharmacy bags (messages encouraging at risk groups to get flu vaccine printed on pharmacy prescription bags) was completed on 4 November.
- As a result, approximately 340,000 visits were made to the flu pages on NHS Choices. The flu campaign page experienced an uplift of about 40% during the campaign.
- It's expected that the campaign will continue to extend in local areas as approximately 20 requests from local teams for the creative assets have been received, specifically for the press and digital display advertisements.
- Bounty have emailed their database of pregnant women (c.100,000 women) encouraging them to get the vaccine and have separately sent an e-mail to mums of two- and three-year-olds.
- Additionally, the campaign will be supported by the pharmacy organisation PSNC who have requested posters so that its members can advertise the flu vaccination in store, see [web link 4](#).

Highlights of the flu vaccination programme media campaign

The media campaign attracted a great deal of attention, as follows:

- A press release, including supportive quote from the Chief Medical Officer (CMO), was issued, aimed mainly at clinical risk groups and parents of two- and three-year-olds.
- The CMO was interviewed on Sky Sunrise, and there was a rolling story on ITV Daybreak news bulletins.
- The Press Association covered the PHE modelling study on the efficacy of vaccinating children, resulting in regional coverage of the flu programme.
- Professor Nick Phin of Public Health England was interviewed by the health editor of the Sunday Express, highlighting the importance of flu vaccination.
- There was coverage by BBC News online and strong pickup by medical trade (e.g. On Medica, Nursing in Practice, Practice Business and Patient.co.uk);
- Dr Raj (media doctor) featured on 'This Morning'.
- Work with long lead media, including Prima on general flu advice for Nov/Dec issues.
- Good regional and local coverage of issues related to flu, including ITV Yorkshire & Humberside requesting a ten-point 'Flu mythbusters' article that they could refer to during their flu season coverage.
- On the specific issue of Fluenz and faith communities, work with the Jewish Chronicle, Zaman (newspaper for Turkish diaspora in UK) and the Mail on Sunday to clarify issues related to porcine gelatine and the child flu vaccine.
- Speaking on behalf of PHE, Dr Tim Davies was interviewed on TV Central.

Update on plans for respiratory and hand hygiene (RHH) campaign

In previous years, this campaign has been launched when the incidence of flu has reached critical levels and our intention is to have creative assets ready, so that they can be deployed at short notice if the need arises.

We have negotiated usage rights for a variety of images that were used last year so we are ready to act if the need arises this winter. The creative rights allow the assets to be used at local level even in the absence of a national campaign, so we will share the press and digital assets locally.

The benefit of continuing with our current RHH campaign is that by encouraging good practices this will naturally have a halo effect of halting the spread of other winter illnesses such as norovirus.

This month's question

What should you do if you inadvertently vaccinate a pregnant woman with the MMR vaccine?

There are no known adverse events resulting from vaccination with MMR vaccine during pregnancy or shortly before becoming pregnant. The vaccine is not recommended in pregnancy as a matter of caution and any woman who receives the vaccine in these circumstances should be advised that there are no safety concerns, either for the mother or the baby. Women who have been immunised with MMR vaccine in pregnancy can therefore be immediately reassured. PHE does follow up all such exposures, usually via the GP, and a Vaccine in pregnancy (VIP) form should be completed. For more information on VIP surveillance, factsheets and a downloadable copy of the form, see [web link 5](#).

Resources

Green Book

Several updated chapters have recently been uploaded – Cholera, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Japanese encephalitis, and Pneumococcal, see [web link 6](#). To see the changes that have been made, where no patch is supplied, click on 'see all updates' in the 'Page history' line, as shown below.

The screenshot shows the GOV.UK website page for 'Hepatitis B: the green book, chapter 18'. The page history section is visible, showing updates on 4 December 2013 and 19 April 2013. A tooltip is displayed over the 4 December update, providing details of the changes made.

Page history: Updated 4 December 2013, [see all updates](#)

4 December 2013 1:33pm
 Updated Body text to include link to Green Book chapter update patches on the National Archives website. Added link to NHS choices.

19 April 2013 10:19am
 First published.

20 March 2013 12:00am

This chapter has been updated with minor editorial amends plus 1 change in policy: for travellers who have completed the primary course of vaccination, a booster at 5 years is no longer recommended.

Vaccine wastage

This month's reminder about the importance of good practice in storing and handling vaccines comes from the Health Protection Agency's publication 'Vaccine incident guidance – actions to take in response to vaccine errors', see [web link 7](#).

'The credibility of an immunisation programme is highly dependent on the assurance of vaccine potency and quality. Substandard handling of vaccines may result in loss of potency or increased reactogenicity in these vaccines. Individuals immunised with these vaccines may be at greater risk of illness or death from the diseases that the vaccines are intended to prevent. As a consequence, public confidence in immunisation programmes may be undermined, thus putting even more lives at risk.'

Following a number of serious incidents in vaccine storage over the past few months, we would like to remind readers to follow the guidance in the recently updated Green Book chapter 3 Storage, distribution and disposal of vaccines at [web link 6](#). Both this chapter, and the 'Protocol for ordering, storing and handling vaccines' at [web link 8](#) will provide all the information you need on how to care for these valuable medical products.

Vaccine supply

Arrangements for ordering any remaining Fluenz vaccine needed for two- and three-year-old children

Fluenz will remain available to order on the ImmForm website until Tuesday 7 January 2014. It will not be available to order after this date, due to it expiring on 15 January 2014.

Fluenz has a limited shelf-life and, like all vaccines, needs to be used before it exceeds its expiry date. Fluenz already supplied for the children's programme for two- and three-year-olds has expiry dates of 18, 23 and 24 December 2013, 13, 14, 15 and 16 January 2014, and 5 February 2014.

So, please ensure you check the vaccine is within its expiry date before using it.

Please contact vaccinesupply@phe.gov.uk if you have any questions or concerns.

Zostavax

Zostavax is currently available to order and is capped at 20 doses per week in England. There is sufficient vaccine in stock to meet the anticipated demand for those aged 70 and 79. For the latest information, please see the ImmForm news item at [web link 9](#).

Typhoid vaccine

Sanofi Pasteur MSD currently has a limited supply of their typhoid vaccine, Typhim Vi. They expect it to be back in stock from the end of January 2014. Janssen is currently supplying Vivotif, on a normal delivery basis. Orders can be placed on 0844 800 3907.

Movianto UK deliveries over Christmas and New Year holidays

Due to the Christmas and New Year holidays, there will be no vaccine deliveries or order processing by Movianto UK on:

- Wednesday 25 December
- Thursday 26 December
- Wednesday 1 January 2014

Deliveries normally scheduled for these days will **not be rescheduled**, so please bear this in mind when placing orders.

For example, if your delivery day is Wednesday 18 December, the cut off for placing an order for a delivery for use over the holiday period is 11:55 am on Monday 16 December. If you miss this date, the next Wednesday delivery will be Wednesday 8 January. The normal ordering and delivery cycle resumes on Thursday 2 January*. Please see the table below for the revised schedule.

Orders can still be placed on ImmForm on all days, but they will not be processed by Movianto UK for dispatch at their warehouse on the days listed, hence the revised order cut-off date.

We recommend that you have two to four weeks of vaccine stock held in your fridge, so you may wish to consider this when ordering for the holiday period. We also recommend that you have at least two contacts registered on ImmForm, as cover for leave etc. To register, please see the ImmForm Helpsheet 8 on how to register at [web link 10](#).

The Vaccine Supply and ImmForm Teams wish all their customers a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Delivery date	Order cut-off date	Order cut off-time
Monday 16/12/2013	Thursday 12/12/2013	11:55 am
Tuesday 17/12/2013	Friday 13/12/2013	11:55 am
Wednesday 18/12/2013	Monday 16/12/2013	11:55 am
Thursday 19/12/2013	Tuesday 17/12/2013	11:55 am
Friday 20/12/2013	Wednesday 18/12/2013	11:55 am
Monday 23/12/2013	Thursday 19/12/2013	11:55 am
Tuesday 24/12/2013	Friday 20/12/2013	11:55 am
Wednesday 25/12/2013	Closed - NO DELIVERIES	
Thursday 26/12/2013	Closed - NO DELIVERIES	
Friday 27/12/2013	Monday 23/12/2013	11:55 am
Monday 30/12/2013	Tuesday 24/12/2013	11:55 am
Tuesday 31/12/2013	Friday 27/12/2013	11:55 am
Wednesday 01/01/2014	Closed - NO DELIVERIES	
*Thursday 02/01/2014	Monday 30/12/2013	11:55 am
Friday 03/01/2014	Tuesday 31/12/2013	11:55 am

*As Scotland has a bank holiday on Thursday 2 January, no deliveries will be made to Scotland on that day.

If you do not receive your scheduled delivery on either the 24 or 31 December for reasons outside of the control of the distributor, then Movianto will make every effort to re-deliver the vaccines on the next working day available. To check the status of your deliveries please contact Movianto directly on 01234 248632 or email them on customercare.uk@movianto.com

Web links

- web link 1** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rotavirus-the-green-book-chapter-27b>
- web link 2** <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/national-hpv-vaccination-coverage-remains-high-and-evidence-shows-programme-effective-in-protecting-womens-health>
- web link 3** <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/vaccine-uptake>
- web link 4** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flu-serious-if-you-have-a-long-term-health-condition>
- web link 5** <http://www.hpa.org.uk/Topics/InfectiousDiseases/InfectionsAZ/VaccineInPregnancySurveillance/>
- web link 6** <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immunisation-against-infectious-disease-the-green-book>
- web link 7** http://www.hpa.org.uk/webc/HPAwebFile/HPAweb_C/1267551139589
- web link 8** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protocol-for-ordering-storing-and-handling-vaccines>
- web link 9** <https://vaccinesupply.immform.dh.gov.uk>
- web link 10** www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-register-immform-helpsheet-8
- web link 11** <http://www.hpa.org.uk/Topics/InfectiousDiseases/InfectionsAZ/VaccineCoverageAndCOVER/>