



Flu vaccination special issue

Although the majority of the flu vaccination programme should have been completed by now (see the first vaccine uptake data at [web link 2](#), this special issue covers several topics relating to the programme that are still relevant – in particular immunisation practitioners should note the [article on the shelf life of the nasal spray vaccine Fluenz Tetra](#).

Just a reminder that it is not too late to offer vaccination to any eligible person that has not yet had the flu vaccine. This is particularly important for those in clinical risk groups who may become seriously ill as a consequence of catching flu. Please make every effort to ensure that we offer the best protection we can to these vulnerable individuals.

Immunisation news

The flu vaccination for health and social care workers – clarification of who pays

The tripartite letter at [web link 1](#) urges all those individuals and organisations employing health and social care workers to ensure that they do all they can to get these members of staff vaccinated against flu every winter. However, it has come to light that there is some confusion over who pays for these vaccinations. To clarify, the following groups should have a flu vaccination, usually provided through an occupational health service:

- all NHS employed frontline healthcare workers (the employer pays for the vaccinations)
- all social care workers (the employer, e.g. the local authority, pays for the vaccinations)
- all health and social care workers employed by private companies (the companies arrange and pay for the vaccinations)

Companies and other employers wishing to vaccinate their staff who are not health or social care workers (or who do not meet any of the eligibility criteria) will have to arrange and pay for the vaccinations.

Frontline health and social care workers have a duty of care to protect their patients and service users from infection. Therefore, as in previous years, free flu immunisation should be offered by NHS organisations to all employees directly involved in delivering care. This is not an NHS service, but an occupational health responsibility being provided to NHS staff by employers. Social care providers and independent primary care providers such as GP, dental and optometry practices, and community pharmacists, should also actively encourage the vaccination of all their relevant staff.

It is not too late for all those working in these roles to get vaccinated and supplies of flu vaccine are still available to order from manufacturers. Please make sure you make every effort to get vaccinated if you haven't already done so.

Flu vaccination update

The flu vaccination campaign is well under way and the first monthly vaccine uptake figures for GP patients and healthcare workers are now available at [web link 2](#).

The weekly national flu reports that give a full round-up of flu activity and other seasonal respiratory illnesses as well as vaccine uptake statistics are available at [web link 3](#).

Currently, influenza activity is at low levels, however, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) continues to circulate, predominantly in those under five years of age.

Protecting your child against flu leaflet – correction

In early copies of this leaflet, and the accompanying template invitation letters on the web, we stated that: 'Side effects are uncommon...' This should have read: 'Serious side effects are uncommon.' This error has been corrected in latest printing of the leaflet and in the letter templates.

PHE apologises for this error and any distress that may have been caused by it.

Air bubbles in syringes and DNA in porcine gelatine – questions from the conferences

September to November are busy months on the conference circuit where health professionals attend seminars and workshops around the country and the immunisation team at PHE has a stand displaying all the patient information leaflets and staff promoting the work of the team. We often get asked clinical questions and here are a couple of recent examples:

'Some people say we should expel the bubble of air that's in the pre-loaded flu vaccine syringes before giving the injection, while others say you shouldn't. Who is right, please?'

Here's the answer:

'You shouldn't get rid of the air bubble. To try to expel it risks accidentally expelling some of the vaccine and therefore not giving the patient the full dose. The air bubble is also there for a reason – the air injected into the muscle forms an airlock preventing the medication seeping out along the needle tract into subcutaneous tissue and onto the skin. The small bolus of air injected following administration of medication clears the needle and prevents a localised reaction from the vaccination.' See [web link 4](#).

and:

'With all this concern about porcine gelatine in the nasal flu vaccine, does it actually contain any DNA from pigs?'

'No; very sensitive scientific tests have shown that the nasal flu vaccine does not contain any detectable DNA from pigs.

This analysis indicates that the gelatine is so degraded that the original source cannot be identified.'

Vaccine supply

Fluenz Tetra shelf life

Fluenz Tetra supplied for the children's part of the national flu programme and pilot programmes has a shorter shelf life than other influenza vaccines. Fluenz Tetra has been supplied with expiry dates ranging from 22 December 2014 and into early January 2015. Please ensure that the expiry date is always checked before use.

A smaller volume of stock will be available with expiry dates later in January and into February 2015. Due to the smaller volume of stock available with longer expiry dates, it will be important to ensure that efforts are made to vaccinate eligible children before the Christmas holidays.

Deliveries of Fluenz Tetra continue to be made weekly alongside usual deliveries for childhood vaccines. We suggest only ordering enough stock to cover the next two to three weeks to minimise wastage.

Vaccine availability for the adult and children's parts of the national flu vaccination programme

Suppliers still have influenza vaccine available to order for the 2014/15 season. The table below contains contact details for the suppliers.

Supplier	Name of product	Vaccine type	Age indications	Contact details
Abbott Healthcare	Influvac	Surface antigen, inactivated virus	From 6 months	0800 358 7468
	Imuvac	Surface antigen, inactivated virus	From 6 months	
AstraZeneca UK Ltd	Fluenz Tetra ▼	Live attenuated, nasal	From 24 months to less than 18 years of age	0845 139 0000
GlaxoSmithKline	Fluarix™ Tetra ▼	Split virion inactivated virus	From 3 years	0800 221 441
MASTA	Imuvac	Surface antigen, inactivated virus	From 6 months	0113 238 7552
	Inactivated influenza vaccine (split virion) BP	Split virion, inactivated virus	From 6 months	
	Enzira	Split virion Inactivated virus	From 5 years	
Novartis Vaccines	Agrippal	Surface antigen, inactivated virus	From 6 months	08457 451 500
	Optaflu ▼	Surface antigen, inactivated virus, prepared in cell cultures	From 18 years	
Pfizer Vaccines	CSL inactivated influenza vaccine	Split virion, inactivated virus	From 5 years	0800 089 4033
	Enzira	Split virion inactivated virus	From 5 years	
Sanofi Pasteur MSD	Inactivated influenza vaccine (split virion) BP	Split virion, inactivated virus	From 6 months	0800 085 5511
	Intanza 9 µg	Split virion, inactivated virus	From 18 years – 59 years	
	Intanza 15 µg	Split virion, inactivated virus	From 60 years	

None of the influenza vaccines for the 2014/15 season contains thiomersal as an added preservative.

Movianto UK deliveries over Christmas and New Year holidays

This is a repeat of the article that appeared in October's issue.

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

- Thursday 25 December 2014
- Friday 26 December 2014
- Thursday 1 January 2015

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 Thursday 18 December, the cut off for placing an order for a delivery for use over the holiday period is 11:55am on Tuesday 16 December. If you miss this date, the next Thursday delivery will be Thursday 8 January. The normal ordering and delivery cycle resumes on Friday 2 January*.

Please see the table on the following page 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.

Due to the Christmas holidays and changed delivery schedule, we recommend that you make sure you have a sufficient stock of all vaccines held in your fridge to see you through the Christmas 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 5](#).

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 22/12/2014	Thursday 18/12/2014	11:55 am
Tuesday 23/12/2014	Friday 19/12/2014	11:55 am
Wednesday 24/12/2014	Monday 22/12/2014	11:55 am
Thursday 25/12/2014	Closed – NO DELIVERIES	
Friday 26/12/2014	Closed – NO DELIVERIES	
Monday 29/12/2014	Tuesday 23/12/2014	11:55 am
Tuesday 30/12/2014	Wednesday 24/12/2014	11:55 am
Wednesday 31/12/2014	Monday 29/12/2014	11:55 am
Thursday 01/01/2015	Closed – NO DELIVERIES	
*Friday 02/01/2015	Tuesday 30/12/2014	11:55 am
Monday 05/01/2015	Wednesday 31/12/2014	11:55 am
Tuesday 06/01/2015	Friday 02/01/2015	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/vaccination-of-health-and-social-care-workers-against-flu-2014-and-2015>
- web link 2 <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/vaccine-uptake#seasonal-flu-vaccine-uptake>
- web link 3 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/weekly-national-flu-reports>
- web link 4 [http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Administering the influenza vaccine: what is best practice for...-a0227796751](http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Administering+the+influenza+vaccine:+what+is+best+practice+for...-a0227796751)
- web link 5 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-register-immform-helpsheet-8>