

NHSGG and CLYDE NEWSLETTER

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Seasonal flu vaccine 2009/10

The official launch of the seasonal influenza vaccination programme will be on 5th October 2009. The annual seasonal influenza vaccination programme is planned to be delivered alongside the influenza A (H1N1) programme. However, colleagues should not delay seasonal flu vaccination on the basis of waiting until influenza A (H1N1) vaccine is available. In due course it may be possible to co-administer the vaccines, and the increased efficiency of this would be welcomed. However, in the meantime, vaccination of those who may be at serious risk from seasonal influenza should commence as soon as the vaccine becomes available.

It is imperative that GPs liaise closely with Community Pharmacies supplying the seasonal flu vaccine in order that vaccine availability and sufficient stock is guaranteed prior to the scheduling of clinics. Patients should be reassured that they will be vaccinated against seasonal influenza. Given that the seasonal flu vaccination programme will run alongside the H1N1 vaccination programme, it is important that colleagues are aware of the difference between the two vaccination programmes, in order to provide appropriate advice to the public. In particular, colleagues should be aware that:

- The seasonal flu vaccine will not provide much cross protection against influenza A (H1N1)
- Many of those who are in risk groups for seasonal flu will need to receive vaccinations against both strains of flu virus
- The number of doses of influenza A (H1N1) vaccination for adults and older children is yet to be established

The national policy for 2009-10 is that flu vaccine should be offered to the following groups:

- All those **aged 65 years and over**
- All **aged 6 months or over** in a ***clinical risk group**
- Those **living in long-stay residential care homes or other long-stay care facilities** where rapid spread is likely to follow introduction of infection and cause high morbidity and mortality
- **Carers** (due to the impact of their having flu on the person being cared for)
- **Poultry workers** as defined in 2006/07. The method by which vaccinations are given to this group is at the discretion of each NHS Board
- **Pregnant women with existing risk factors** should routinely be offered seasonal flu vaccination, *regardless of the stage of pregnancy*

*see CMO 8 (2009) [http://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/cmo/CMO\(2009\)08.pdf](http://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/cmo/CMO(2009)08.pdf)

Return of 2008/09 flu vaccine

The PHPU recently reminded GPs about disposal of flu vaccines from last year (08/09 flu season).

Practice staff should telephone the local vaccine holding - centre to arrange return of vaccines for safe disposal. Vaccines should be accompanied by a completed return-note advising the quantity returned and the reason for disposal.

The phone numbers of the holding centres (from 7th September) are as follows:

Leverndale **211 6675** - Glasgow practices and those practices previously supplied from Vale of Leven

RAH **314 6148** - Inverclyde and Renfrewshire practices

Staff should not contact the community pharmacy.

H1N1 vaccination seminars 2009

With the expected introduction of the H1N1 vaccine from the end of October 2009, the PHPU has arranged 7 seminars to brief colleagues on the various aspects of the programme. Although not finalised, the seminar programme will cover H1N1 epidemiology; risk groups and rationale for vaccination; vaccine licensing and safety data; indication and contraindications; vaccine administration; update on the cold chain; and the implementation plan in NHSGGC.

H1N1 vaccination seminars - dates, times and venues

Thursday 15 th October	12 - 2.30pm	Ardgowan Room, Tontine Hotel, Greenock*
Monday 19 th October	12 - 2.30pm	Walton Conference Suite, SGH
Monday 19 th October	6.30 - 9 pm	Beardmore Conference Centre, Clydebank*
Tuesday 20 th October	12 - 2.30pm	Hospitality Suite, St. Mirren Park (Football Stadium)
Tuesday 20 th October	6.30 - 9 pm	Conf. Rooms 1 & 2, Glasgow Nth Regeneration Centre, Ayr St *
Thursday 22 nd October	12 - 2.30pm	Beardmore Conference Centre, Clydebank
Friday 23 rd October	12 - 2.30pm	Conf. Rooms 1 & 2, Glasgow Nth Regeneration Centre, Ayr St.

* Please note there are still quite a number of spaces available at the Greenock venue and the evening seminars at the Beardmore and Glasgow North Regeneration Centre.

All relevant lead-staff have been sent details and return-slips for distribution to all immunisation staff. The date/time/venue of choice should be ticked on the slip and returned to the PHPU by Friday 9th October 2009.

E-learning course - uptake

The e-learning immunisation course has proved popular with encouraging uptake and completion rates among primary care staff.

The grant scheme is still available to fund study-time for individuals who register and fully complete the course within 6 months. The grant of **£360** will be made to the individual's employer to use either as a contribution towards backfilling or to pay the individual directly for taking the course in their own time. All funds will be paid through employers to ensure tax and NI contributions.

If you would like to register for the e-learning course then please contact Dr Gillian Penrice (CPHM) PHPU for an application form: gillian.penrice@ggc.scot.nhs.uk

Hib catch-up cohort

In NHSGGC, the number of children in the Hib catch-up cohort born between 04/04/03 and 03/09/05 who have not yet received a 5:1 booster is **2639**.

The number of children born between 01/10/03 and 03/09/05 who have not received a 5:1 booster is **2416**. This group of children (aged 6 years and under at 1st October 2009), will be called by SIRS.

The **223** children in the remaining group i.e. those aged over 6 years on the 1st October 2009, will not be called by SIRS and practices will have to identify any children in the original cohort group aged over 6 years at the 1st October 2009, to arrange boosting.

SIRS now has the facility to change the priority for scheduling boosters.

It is currently set at 4 years 6 months (this can be changed but only across the Board) which means that priority for scheduling will be given to children this age and older, then the younger children from 3 years 4 months upwards (subject to available appointments). Primary immunisations will not be affected with this change.

Practices that do not have a queue of children to be scheduled will not be affected by this change as all children will be scheduled as normal.

Please note that SIRS cannot change the 4 years 6 months setting on an individual basis, however, practices have the option of returning to a youngest-to-oldest order of scheduling as before. Practice staff are asked to contact Julie Mullin on **211 7616** if they have any queries.

Cohort children requiring Hib-only boosting

There are some children in the Hib-catch-up cohort who were called for 5-in-1 PSB but received 4-in-1 (without Hib) due to shortage of vaccine and therefore need to be called again for Hib (using Hib/MenC). Staff should note that these children will not be automatically recalled by SIRS for Hib/MenC and therefore each practice must ensure that it has its own list of children for recall. Only cohort children who have not yet attended for PSB will be listed on the Queue Print.

H1N1 in schools

As winter approaches, the number of cases of swine flu is beginning to rise with an increasing number of calls to the PHPU from schools concerned about flu among pupils and staff. In response, a letter has been sent from the PHPU to all schools (6th Oct 2009), the content of which is summarised below.

The UK moved to the treatment phase of the swine flu outbreak in July 2009, which means that the flu virus is now widespread in the community. Consequently, Public Health is no longer trying to contain the spread of the virus by offering medication (Tamiflu) to asymptomatic contacts of cases or closing schools when cases have been diagnosed. However, for the great majority of children, swine flu is still a mild illness.

At present, the PHPU advice to schools is as follows : -

- No school closures on public health grounds
- No medication (Tamiflu) prescribed routinely to asymptomatic contacts of cases of swine flu *
- No letters to parents following the clinical or laboratory diagnosis of flu case(s) in their school.

*If there is concern about children with medical conditions that make them particularly vulnerable to infection, PHPU will be happy to advise and carry out a risk assessment, if necessary.

Meantime, the PHPU continues to stress the importance - in the home and school/nursery - of hand-washing and proper use of tissues (covering the mouth/nose during coughs and sneezes). This is especially important for all children and young people.

The advice to any pupil or staff member who develops a flu-like illness remains the same - stay at home, do not go to school, and seek medical advice either by contacting the GP or NHS 24.

H1N1 vaccine - is it safe?

The H1N1 vaccines that are going to be used in the UK are made by two different companies, GSK and Baxter, using the same well-established manufacturing processes for the seasonal flu vaccines which are produced every year. The H1N1 vaccines will undergo the same rigorous procedures that are in place for seasonal flu vaccines.

The millions of doses of seasonal flu vaccine produced annually have a well-established safety profile. Constituents used during the manufacture of H1N1 vaccines have been used in vaccine production for many years and have a long safety record. Data from early clinical trials confirm, as expected, that the side effects of H1N1 vaccines are similar to those of the seasonal flu vaccine.

Licence information

Both the GSK and Baxter vaccines have been recommended for licensing by the European Medicines Agency. The GSK vaccine has since been licensed for use in the UK and the licence for the Baxter vaccine is expected shortly.

If you would like to comment on any aspect of this newsletter please contact Marie Laurie on 201 4933 or at marie.laurie@ggc.scot.nhs.uk