

April 2010



## Influenza Flu Kit Update #1

As we mentioned in our original Influenza Kit letter we said we would send you additional information as it became available and we included a new section - *Latest Information/updates* - for you to store this additional information.

Enclosed is your first update and it includes:

- An order form for six new additional consumer brochures in other languages including: *Maori, Chinese, Samoan, Cook Islands Maori, Tongan and Korean*
- An update to the *Table Comparing Seasonal Influenza Vaccines for the 2010 Season* (please remove the old one from your kit as it is now out of date)

*Additionally, the Ministry of Health has announced the following changes since the Flu Kit was originally distributed:*

### **Extension of the 2010 eligibility criteria to children (under 5) for free seasonal influenza vaccine**

- The Ministry of Health has extended free influenza vaccination to more children aged 6 months to under 5 years, for 2010 only. General practices can now use their discretion to offer free flu immunisation to children from high deprivation backgrounds who are aged between 6 months and 5 years.
- Children with certain chronic conditions are already eligible - which is the case every year.
- Evidence from 2009 suggests that children with chronic medical conditions, particularly respiratory and neurological; children from areas of high deprivation (quintile 5); and Maori and Pacific children are more at risk of hospitalisation from swine flu.
- The factors that the College of General Practitioners (RNZCGP) suggest you can use to identify high risk children include "Maori or Pacific ethnicity, being from areas of deprivation (quintile 5), living in crowded housing, requiring high use of primary and secondary care for recurrent illness, having respiratory conditions, being poorly nourished, or being exposed to passive smoking in the home." (ePulse V12 number 13, 2010).

### **Licensure of INFLUVAC®**

- INFLUVAC® was approved on 27 January 2010 for use in infants and children from 6 months of age (note this differs from the information in the 2010 Flu Kit). Please refer to [www.medsafe.govt.nz](http://www.medsafe.govt.nz) for the latest datasheet.

### **Administering INFLUVAC® to children under 3 years of age**

- The 0.5 mL INFLUVAC® syringe has no graduated marking to administer 0.25 mL of vaccine, the recommended dose for infants and children aged from 6 months to 35 months. For clear instructions on how to administer 0.25 mL of the INFLUVAC® vaccine go to <http://www.immune.org.nz/?t=561> or phone 0800 466863.
- All children aged less than 9 years require two doses of influenza vaccine for 2010. Please refer to the attached updated Vaccine Comparison Chart

And thank-you, as your support contributes to keeping our communities healthy by reducing influenza disease.

### **Michelle Kapinga**

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