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To: General Practitioners, Practice Nurses, Practice Managers and Health Professionals
From: David Wansbrough, Manager, Immunisation team, Ministry of Health
Subject: **UPDATE – FLUVAX[®] in children under five years of age**

Recommendation – do not give FLUVAX[®] to children under five years of age

- The Ministry of Health recommends not administering FLUVAX[®] (made by CSL) to children under five years of age until there is more information about whether there is an association with an increased risk of febrile convulsions in Australia and New Zealand.
- There are reports from Australia of some children under five who have received FLUVAX[®] and have experienced febrile convulsions. There have also been at least three cases of febrile convulsions in New Zealand following influenza vaccination – our current information is that all three cases are linked to FLUVAX[®].
- Vaccines can cause fevers, so febrile convulsions can occur following the use of any vaccine. Whether there is an increased risk with FLUVAX[®] is currently unclear.
- The Ministry of Health is continuing to recommend that children at risk of complications from influenza get immunised using other brands of the vaccine if they are available. You can give VAXIGRIP[®] (made by Sanofi) or INFLUVAC[®] (made by Solvay) to children under five.
- Australian authorities have suspended all seasonal influenza immunisations for children under 5. In New Zealand, the Ministry of Health has not taken this step but is monitoring the situation closely.

Influenza vaccine supply

Supplies of influenza vaccine have been delayed by the airline disruptions in Europe so current stocks are very low. Some orders placed with the warehouse may be delayed.

Shipments of VAXIGRIP[®] have left France and are expected to arrive in New Zealand this week. We will inform you when sufficient supplies are available to allow influenza vaccination clinics to be rescheduled.

If you have any queries about anything in this update, please email immunisation@moh.govt.nz or 0800IMMUNE@auckland.ac.nz or phone 0800 466 863 (0800 IMMUNE)



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