



Managing influenza vaccine supply

With supply of influenza vaccine critically low, there will be a need to move vaccines within a region to enable those at higher risk to receive immunisations. The Ministry of Health is asking General Practices and Pharmacists (those with contract for funded programme) to closely manage their stock levels and **only vaccinate those who are eligible for publicly funded vaccines.**

- Pregnant women
- Children aged 4 and under with serious respiratory illnesses
- People with severe asthma, heart disease, diabetes and other serious health conditions that make them more susceptible to influenza
- Those aged 65 and over **with significant comorbidities.**

Strictly limited stocks of Fluarix Tetra can still be ordered, with a maximum order of 5 doses. Limited stock of Afluria Quad will also be available for eligible patients, this includes pregnant women.

Note: For high risk eligible children 3-4 years of age please try to source Influxac Tetra. If no Influxac Tetra is available then a clinical decision can be made to use Fluarix Tetra. There are no safety concerns in using this vaccine with children.

If influenza vaccines are required by a practice they should contact their local Immunisation Coordinator who will try to assist in locating any available vaccine. **Please DO NOT call the IMAC 0800 IMMUNE phone line, they are NOT able to assist you with this.)**

NOTE: If you have influenza vaccines in the fridge that could be shared with other local practices, please let your Immunisation Coordinator know. If possible, retain enough influenza vaccine for the number of pregnant women normally expected in your practice over the next 6 months.

If a practice does receive vaccines from another practice, you will need a written record of the request, and you should both record the number of doses, batch numbers, etc.

Please **ensure that you arrange to refund the practice for these vaccines**, as they will have paid for the vaccines from HCL.

If vaccines are being moved please ensure that you manage the transportation correctly according to the requirements of the National Standards for Vaccine Storage and Transportation for Immunisation Providers 2017, see brief outline below - for full details click on the link below.

<http://www.immune.org.nz/sites/default/files/national-standards-vaccine-storage-and-transportation-immunisation-providers-2017-v2.pdf>

From 7.3 transporting vaccines using a chilly bin

Immunisation providers must use temperature-monitored chilly bins to store vaccines when:

- Transporting vaccines to another provider

General principles

- Store vaccines between +2°C and +8°C at all times.
- Only use polystyrene chilly bins for temporary storage during refrigerator maintenance or for transport to another provider.
- For each chilly bin, use sufficient ice packs and insulation material.

- For each chilly bin, monitor the temperature using either a digital minimum/maximum thermometer with audible alarm or a data logger with probe and an external display (depending on the reason for using the chilly bin). It must be possible to read the temperature without opening the chilly bin.
- Staff should check and record the minimum, maximum and current temperatures of the vaccines:
 - before transporting the vaccines
 - before unpacking them at the alternative storage area
 - every 20 to 30 minutes while transporting or temporarily storing them.

Providers must keep documentation associated with monitoring the temperature of vaccines in chilly bins for 10 years, along with the rest of the cold chain documentation.

From Appendix 3: Transporting or storing vaccines in chilly bins

An immunisation provider must consider the following factors when transporting or storing vaccines in chilly bins.

The amount of vaccine to be transported or stored will determine the size of the chilly bin required.

1. The volume of vaccine should be no more than one-third of the container's capacity.
2. Cool each chilly bin by placing ice packs inside it, usually around 30 minutes before using it. However, cooling can take longer if it is a large chilly bin.
3. Once the container has cooled, remove these ice packs and insert approved insulation material along the bottom of the container. For a large chilly bin, you can keep the ice packs in place and put a layer of insulation over the top.
4. Add the vaccine stock. Place the probe of the temperature monitoring device you are using in one of the boxes of vaccine or an empty vaccine box, closest to the ice packs.
5. Place a layer of insulation on top of all the vaccines, to ensure vaccines are not frozen by contact with or exposure to the ice packs.
6. Place the required number of ice packs on top of the insulation to reach a temperature of between +2°C and +8°C.
7. Secure the lid using the clips on the container.
8. Do not start travelling until the loaded chilly bin temperatures have stabilised at between +2°C and +8°C. (Cool vaccine from the refrigerator may cause the temperature of the chilly bin to drop. If so, you should adjust the number of ice packs before travelling).