

2010 Daycare Flu Immunization Requirement: Q+A



1. Q: Which new vaccines will be required for children enrolled at licensed child day care centers, group day care homes, and family day care homes?

A: Annual seasonal influenza and Hepatitis A vaccines will be required for children of specified ages attending licensed child day care centers, group day care homes, and family day care homes.

Influenza (Flu) Vaccine

2. Q: Why did the state health department make the influenza vaccine requirement only apply to children aged 6 months–4 years (59 months) at licensed child day care centers, group day care homes, and family day care homes?

A: Influenza is responsible for approximately 200,000 hospitalizations and 36,000 deaths each year in the United States. Children two years of age and younger have hospitalization rates second only to people 65 years and older. To reduce the risk of hospitalization from complications of influenza, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) now recommend routine annual influenza vaccination of children 6 months–18 years of age. However, annual vaccination of all children aged 6 months–4 years (59 months) and older children with conditions that place them at increased risk for complications from influenza should continue to be a **primary** focus of vaccination efforts.

3. Q: Why is it required that the flu vaccine be given during a specific time frame?

A: 1) Most flu vaccine is distributed to health care providers (HCPs) by October and November each year so most HCPs should have their supplies at that time.

2) We also know that public requests for flu vaccine peaks around September–December.

3) If we can get a majority of children immunized within that four month timeframe, it will make monitoring the immunization status of a large number of children more manageable by the school or public health agency.

4. Q: How should a child day care center, group day care home, or family day care home enforce the flu vaccine regulation for those children who have not received the flu shot by December 31st?

A: Children who have not received the flu vaccine by December 31st must be excluded from child care for the duration of influenza season (through March 31st) or until they receive at least one dose of the influenza vaccine.

5. Q: Do all children aged 6 months–4 years (59 months) who have not received a flu vaccine by December 31st need to be excluded from child care?

A: Children do not have to be excluded from child care if the following conditions are met:

1) the child care provider has received a statement signed by the child's HCP indicating that the child has an appointment to receive the required immunization (this is considered "immunization in progress"). Continued enrollment in day care for more than thirty days after the named immunization appointment shall be contingent on the child care provider receiving written documentation from the HCP stating either: that the named appointment was kept and the child received the scheduled immunizations, or that the child was unable to receive the scheduled immunizations for medical reasons and a new appointment date is named;

2) the child care provider has received a statement signed and dated by the child's HCP indicating that the child has a medical contraindication to immunization;

3) the child care provider has received a written statement that immunization is contrary to the religious beliefs and practices of the child or the parent of such child. Such statement shall be signed by the child's parent.

6. Q: Is it acceptable for a child to receive flu vaccine in August when the regulations require one flu dose between September 1 and December 31 of each year?

A: If children do get vaccinated during August with the upcoming seasonal flu vaccine, these vaccinations will be accepted and count toward the mandate requirement.

7. Q: Where can a family go to get the flu vaccine if the pediatrician does not have any more flu vaccine?

A: If a HCP cannot provide the flu vaccine within the given time frame of September 1–December 31st, documentation stating that the child has an appointment to receive the flu vaccine from his or her HCP would be acceptable.

Barring that there is no national flu vaccine shortage and a HCP cannot guarantee an adequate supply of flu vaccine, other alternatives must be sought by the family. Options include:

- 1) Seeking out another HCP who can administer flu vaccine to children;
- 2) Checking with the local health department to see if they administer flu vaccine to children of the necessary age and health insurance status;
- 3) Checking your local newspaper for flu clinic listings and verifying that they have flu vaccine available for children of the necessary age and health insurance status.

8. Q: What if there is a flu vaccine shortage or a flu vaccine distribution problem?

A: In the event of a national or state vaccine supply shortage, as determined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Department of Public Health Commissioner, respectively, the Commissioner or his or her designee may temporarily suspend the immunization requirement for the particular immunization affected by the supply shortage.

9. Q: How is the 'flu season' defined?

A: Influenza season generally occurs during November through the end of March.

10. Q: Is flu vaccine required after March?

A: No, students enrolling in school after March 31st are not required to get vaccinated but flu season may extend until May and therefore getting a flu vaccine even late in the season is still protective.

11. Q: Is there flu vaccine available that does not contain the preservative, thimerosal?

A: Most single dose vials or syringes of influenza vaccine do not contain the preservative, thimerosal. The live, attenuated, influenza vaccine, (Brand Name: FluMist) given intra-nasally, is thimerosal-free. For a listing of thimerosal content in U.S. licensed vaccines, go to:

<http://www.vaccinesafety.edu/thi-table.htm>. For more information about vaccine safety and thimerosal, go to: <http://www.fda.gov/cber/vaccine/thimerosal.htm>

12. Q: Aside from the flu vaccination requirement for children 6–59 months, who else should get vaccinated for flu?

A: All people age 6 months and older are now recommended to receive annual influenza vaccination beginning with the 2010–2011 influenza season. Annual vaccination should begin as soon as the 2010–11 influenza vaccine is available.

For more information on influenza vaccines, visit: www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/vaccine/index.htm