



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH, HSE SOUTH
(CORK & KERRY)

IMMUNISATION FOCUS

NATIONAL IMMUNISATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SEASONAL INFLUENZA VACCINE 2011/2012

The 2011/2012 seasonal influenza vaccine is strongly recommended for

- All those aged 65 years and older
- Adults and children over 6 months of age with any of the following:
 - chronic illness requiring regular follow up (e.g. chronic respiratory disease including cystic fibrosis, moderate or severe asthma, chronic heart disease, chronic neurological disease, diabetes mellitus, chronic liver disease, chronic neurological disease including multiple sclerosis, hereditary and degenerative disorders of the central nervous system etc)
 - those who are immunosuppressed due to disease or treatment including those with missing or non functioning spleens
- Children with any condition (e.g. cognitive dysfunction, spinal cord injury, seizure disorder, or other neuromuscular disorder) that can compromise respiratory function especially those attending special schools/day centres
- Children and teenagers on long-term aspirin therapy (because of the risk of Reyes syndrome)
- Those with morbid obesity i.e. Body Mass Index over 40
- **Pregnant women (vaccine can be given at any stage of pregnancy)**
- Healthcare workers
- Residents of nursing homes, and other long stay institutions
- Carers
- People who have close, regular contact with pigs, poultry or water fowl

BOLD indicates new group for 2011/2012

CHANGE IN SCHOOL IMMUNISATION PROGRAMME: INTRODUCTION OF BOOSTER DOSE OF PERTUSSIS AT 11-14 YEARS

In line with the recommendation from National Immunisation Advisory Committee and the National Immunisation Office, the booster 2:1 (low dose Diphtheria and Tetanus) vaccine will no longer be given to 6th Class pupils in primary schools. A new Booster 3:1 (low dose Diphtheria, Tetanus & Pertussis) vaccine is now available and this will be offered to all 1st year students in second level schools from September 2011. In Cork & Kerry, however, this will not be offered until September 2012 as the vaccine is not recommended for those who have received Td in the last 2 years and those entering 1st year this September will already have received Td in 6th class.

Experience in Ireland and internationally has shown that, while primary immunisation with pertussis vaccine gives good protection in childhood, there is waning of immunity as the child gets older. The introduction of an adolescent pertussis booster will boost immunity and provide more long-term protection. The Tdap vaccine contains lower levels of pertussis antigen than the vaccines used for infant and 4-5 year booster doses.

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MEASLES ON THE INCREASE AGAIN IN IRELAND

Measles cases have increased again this year. This year as of 16th September 209 cases have been reported; 157 (75%) confirmed. Children in the 0-4 year age group are most affected with 44% of all cases occurring in the pre-school age group. Some of these children were under 12 months, too young for routine vaccination. The current outbreak is focused in the Dublin area (particularly in the Co. Dublin area north of the Liffey) where 168 (80%) of the 209 cases have occurred. The vast majority of cases are occurring in those who are unvaccinated.

We are seeing a small number of cases in Cork and Kerry with five cases confirmed so far this year.

Children are now back at schools, preschools and crèches. There is concern that we may again see spread of infection when children are mixing in these settings. We know that our MMR immunisation uptakes are below the 95% needed to prevent outbreaks. The uptake for Quarter 2, 2011 was 92% for 2 year olds in Cork and Kerry. However, the uptake varies in different areas from a high of 94% in Cork North and South Lee to a low of 81% in West Cork. There are a considerable number of unvaccinated children and young adults in our population who are susceptible to measles illness if exposed to cases.

MMR is a highly effective vaccine; following one dose over 90% are protected and following two doses about 99% are protected. Please take every opportunity to check the MMR vaccine status of children and encourage parents to appropriately vaccinate their children.

MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE TREATMENT PACKS

The incidence of meningococcal disease has decreased dramatically since the high levels of the late 1990s. In 2010, in Cork and Kerry, there were 15 cases (13 confirmed) compared to the highest levels recorded in 1999 of 91 cases (60 confirmed). However, all health professionals need to maintain an awareness of the possibility of meningococcal disease as cases do still occur. Early treatment of suspected meningococcal disease with benzylpenicillin may be lifesaving and it is recommended that GPs carry supplies of this drug in an emergency bag.

With this newsletter we are sending each GP a pack, containing benzylpenicillin, water for injection, syringe, needles, swabs and dosage information, for carrying in their emergency bags. If any GP requires additional packs please request one from the Department of Public Health at 021-4927363.

HPV CATCH UP

The HSE is extending the national Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination programme from September 2011 to include a catch-up programme for older schoolgirls. This programme will reduce the risk of cervical cancer in girls in Ireland.

In keeping with best practice from other countries and to ensure high vaccine uptake the HSE will continue to target all girls in 1st year of second level schools in a school based programme.

In addition, there will also be a catch up programme for all girls who will be in 6th year in September 2011. This will be repeated for the following two years in September 2012 and 2013 and will result in all unvaccinated girls in the senior cycle of second level schools being offered HPV vaccine.

All girls require three doses of vaccine with a two month interval between the 1st and 2nd dose and a four month interval between the 2nd and 3rd doses.

School Year 2011/2012	HPV Vaccination Programme
1 st Year Girls	Will be offered in School Year 2011/2012
2 nd Year Girls	Vaccination completed in School Year 2010/2011
3 rd Year Girls	Vaccination completed in School Year 2010/2011
4 th Year/Transition Year Girls	Will be offered in School Year 2013/2014
5 th Year Girls	Will be offered in School Year 2012/2013
6 th Year Girls	Will be offered in School Year 2011/2012