The most recent vaccine uptake figures, both national and local, show a low uptake of the final doses of Hib, MenC and Pneumococcal vaccines. In Cork and Kerry records indicate that only 76% of children have received the Hib booster, 75% the third MenC and 85% the third PCV.

Under the new primary immunisation schedule, implemented in September 2008, the first dose of MMR and the third dose of PCV are recommended at 12 months of age while the third dose of MenC and a Hib booster are recommended at 13 months.

Table 1. Change in the Primary Childhood Immunisation Schedule introduced on September 1st 2008 for children born on or after July 1st 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Children born before 01/07/2008</th>
<th>Children born on or after 01/07/2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birth</td>
<td>BCG</td>
<td>BCG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 months</td>
<td>DTaP/Hib/IPV + MenC</td>
<td>DTaP/Hib/IPV/HepB + PCV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 months</td>
<td>DTaP/Hib/IPV + MenC</td>
<td>DTaP/Hib/IPV/HepB + MenC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>DTaP/Hib/IPV + MenC</td>
<td>DTaP/Hib/IPV/HepB + PCV + MenC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>MMR + Hib</td>
<td>MMR + PCV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 months</td>
<td>———</td>
<td>MenC + Hib</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The change in schedule, with the additional visit over 12 months of age may be causing some confusion for parents. We would ask all GPs, practice nurses and public health nurses to encourage parents to follow the current recommended schedule and to attend for immunisation at 12 and 13 months.

Please see [www.immunisation.ie](http://www.immunisation.ie) for complete information on the Irish immunisation schedule.
Meningococcal Disease: Figures down

2010 has seen a decrease in cases of meningococcal disease in Cork and Kerry. Up to 7th December there have been 15 cases, compared to 21 at the same time last year. Of the 15 cases 13 were confirmed, 12 Group B and 1 Group C. The Group C case was in an unvaccinated child. Tragically there have been 2 deaths this year, a young child and an elderly person.

It is important that all health professionals and also the public remain vigilant for meningococcal disease, which tends to occur more frequently in the winter and early spring.

New Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine – Prevenar 13

Vaccination with pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) became part of the routine childhood programme in Ireland in 2008. The vaccine used in this programme to date - called Prevenar - protects against seven pneumococcal serotypes.

Prevenar 13, protects against six additional serotypes, is being introduced into the childhood programme. This will mean there is a significant extension to protection offered to babies and young children.

Prevenar 13 should be given to all babies born on or after October 1st 2010.

All babies born on or after 1st January 2010 should receive one dose of Prevenar 13 as their third dose of PCV (i.e. when they are 12 months of age).

There is no change to the current childhood schedule and Prevenar 13 should be administered at 2, 6 and 12 months.

Further information including frequently asked questions are available from the National Immunisation Office website (www.immunisation.ie) in the healthcare professional section under pneumococcal.

HPV update

The HPV Vaccination campaign for 1st years commenced on 13th September 2010. As the commencement had been delayed from 2009 a double cohort of girls, i.e. 1st and 2nd year students were offered vaccination. The vaccination programme is being undertaken by HSE school vaccination teams. The first phase, i.e. 1st of 3 doses, was undertaken in 89 second level schools and 6 special schools in Cork & Kerry between the middle of September to middle of October.

The uptake achieved ranged from 64% - 82% in 1st year (average 77%) and 56% - 86% in 2nd year (average 75%). The second phase, 2nd dose, commenced in the middle of November and was due to be completed by the middle of December, however due to inclement weather conditions some schools were postponed. It is hoped to complete these before Christmas with perhaps some mop up clinics in the New Year.

Cathy Falvey – Many Thanks!

I am sure many of you will have had contact with Cathy Falvey, our Immunisation Co-ordinator for many years. Cathy retired at the end of November and will be greatly missed. We wish her a long and happy retirement.

Valerie Healy has taken on the role of Immunisation Co-ordinator. Valerie can be contacted at

Primary Care Unit
26 South Mall
Cork
021-4921877

Valerie will be happy to deal with any queries regarding vaccine delivery/supply and payment issues.