

To:
General Practices (via GP and CCG bulletins)
Heads of Public Health and Heads of Primary Care (direct mailing for dissemination to practices)
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Dear Colleague

Update on use of adjuvanted trivalent flu vaccine for 2018-19 flu season

We are aware that planning for the 2018-19 influenza vaccination campaign is already underway and many practices and community pharmacy providers are in the process of placing provisional orders for next season's influenza vaccine. This update summarises recent advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) and the latest update in the Green Book on adjuvanted trivalent flu vaccine that can support your decisions on optimal choice of influenza vaccine for the 2018/19 season.

1. General principles

- a. Using more than one vaccine supplier: it is recommended that orders for injectable flu vaccine are placed with more than one supplier (where possible) to help reduce the risk of local vaccine shortages due to batch failures or delays in deliveries from a single supplier.
- b. Ordering appropriate amount of stock to maximise uptake in eligible patients:
 - The eligible groups ≥ 18 years of age notified for the 2017-18 season are expected to remain unchanged. Any changes will be notified as soon as possible.
 - It is important that a sufficient stock of vaccine is secured to enable maximum uptake in a practice, improving on previous year's uptake and aiming to achieve the uptake ambitions set out in the annual flu letter
 - Practices should consider any local population growth, increase in their registered population aged 65 years and over or an increase in any at risk populations.

- c. The needs of any patients with egg allergy for vaccine with no/low ovalbumin content should be considered.
- d. It is also important to provide the vaccine that offers the best protection for the various at risk groups. Practices will wish to consider if more than one type of vaccine should be ordered to best meet the needs of their practice population.

2. Advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI)

The **adjuvanted trivalent inactivated flu vaccine** (Fluad®: Seqirus) was licensed late in 2017 and is available for use in the 2018-19 season. Based on available evidence, JCVI concluded at its October 2017 meeting that adjuvanted trivalent flu vaccine is more effective and highly cost effective in those aged over 65 years and above compared with the non-adjuvanted or 'normal' influenza vaccines currently used in the UK for this age-group.

The JCVI has accordingly advised that the use of the adjuvanted trivalent flu vaccine should be a priority for those aged 75 years and over, given that the non-adjuvanted inactivated vaccine has showed no significant effectiveness in this group over recent seasons, and the adjuvanted trivalent flu vaccine is therefore currently considered to be the only licensed cost-effective option for this group.

Further detail on the JCVI's advice can be found in Immunisation against infectious disease (The Green Book) and in the JCVI minutes.

Influenza chapter of the 'Green Book' can be found at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/652682/Greenbook_chapter_19_flu.pdf

The draft minutes of the JCVI's meeting on 4 October 2017 can be found at:

<https://app.box.com/s/iddfb4ppwkmtjusir2tc>

3. Cost and reimbursement

General practitioners can be reimbursed the list price cost for influenza vaccines that they purchase and administer to eligible patients.

Funding is available for the use of the adjuvanted trivalent flu vaccine in those aged 75 years and over in 2018/19.

Yours faithfully

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