



Australian Government
Department of Health and Ageing

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER

Dear Immunisation Provider

Continued temporary suspension of use of seasonal influenza vaccine in children aged 5 years of age and under

I would like to give you an update to my letter of 23 April 2010. The investigation into the apparent increase in the numbers of young children experiencing fever and febrile convulsions after seasonal influenza vaccination is continuing. To date, the significance of these reports has not been determined and until further scientific, clinical and epidemiological data are analysed, the precautionary suspension of the use of seasonal influenza vaccine in children aged 5 years and under will continue.

Children aged 5 years and under should not be given seasonal influenza vaccine. This advice applies to all seasonal influenza vaccines. Children who have already received one dose of the vaccine and are scheduled to have a second dose should have the second dose deferred. Good immunity will develop after the second dose even if it is delayed past the usual 4 week interval. An alternative is to vaccinate with the pandemic H1N1 vaccine (Panvax®), which is not affected by the suspension.

Recommendations for the use of seasonal influenza vaccine in children 6 years and older and in adults and for the use of Panvax® in anyone aged 6 months and over have not changed. In particular, those who are at increased risk of severe complications from seasonal influenza should continue to be vaccinated

The attached copy of the Department of Health and Ageing's media release provides additional information about the continuing suspension. Copies of this letter and the media release are posted on the Immunise Australia website at www.immunise.health.gov.au Additional information can be accessed on the same website or by phoning the Immunise Australia Call Centre on 1800 671 811.

I will continue to keep you informed of the progress of the investigation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jim Bishop', written over a white background.

Professor Jim Bishop AO
MD MMed MBBS FRACP FRCPA

30 April 2010