

The CDC recommends new groups be routinely vaccinated for the flu. The change impacts 16.7 million people.



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New CDC Guidelines Expand List of Flu Vaccine Recipients

Changes from the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) increase the population of patients who should receive routine flu vaccine. More than 16 million people, including children age 2-5, and their household contacts are affected.

WHAT

Updates from ACIP significantly expand the number of people who should receive regular flu vaccine.

The new guidelines require that children between the ages of 2 and 5 be vaccinated to protect their health and help stem the spread of influenza into the community.

The guidelines also recommend that "household contacts" of children in the new age group (i.e., their parents, older siblings, caregivers, and others who have regular contact with them) be vaccinated as well.

The changes were presented during ACIP's February 2006 meeting in Atlanta. The advisory group to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) decides who should routinely receive vaccine.

WHEN

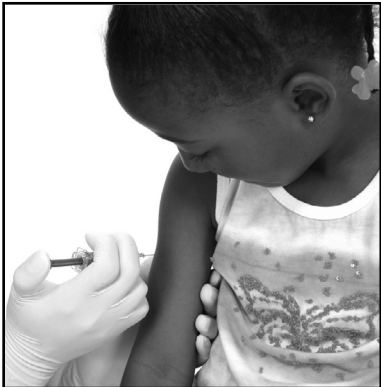
The advisory committee's recommendations received final approval in June 2006. The new guidelines go into effect during the 2006-2007 flu season.

THE IMPACT

The updates by ACIP affect more than 5.3 million children ages 2-5 and more than 11.4 million parents, siblings, and others who qualify as household contacts of children in this age group, according to the CDC.¹ When combined with other targeted groups, the guidelines raise the total number of Americans who are advised to get a flu shot to approximately 218 million.²

NEW FLU STRATEGY

The recommendation to vaccinate children age 2-5 "takes into consideration a broader view of the burden of illness..."¹ and the



What Providers Need To Know

CURRENT GUIDELINES

Vaccinate:

- Children age 6-23 months
- Children age 6 months-18 years who are on long-term aspirin therapy
- Adults age 50 and older
- Nursing home/long-term care residents
- Women who are pregnant or will be during flu season
- Anyone with chronic medical conditions or anyone at increased risk of flu complications
- Healthcare workers and caregivers for high-risk patients

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES

Vaccinate:

- Children age 2-5 and their household contacts and caregivers
- Anyone with a condition that can compromise respiratory function or handling of respiratory secretions. Those with:
 - cognitive dysfunction
 - spinal cord injuries
 - other neuromuscular disorders

Strongly encourage:

- All healthcare workers and the facilities that employ them to vaccinate

healthcare utilization associated with influenza, according to the CDC. It also considers otherwise healthy children who are at increased risk of requiring flu-related medical care.

Reports that children age 2-5 with influenza are nearly as likely to require visits to healthcare providers and emergency rooms as children who are 6-23 months old factored into the new strategy and ACIP's recommendation to expand current guidelines.¹

ANTICIPATED BENEFITS

Studies show that vaccinating children—who are principally responsible for spreading influenza—may help protect the elderly and the chronically ill, who are at the highest risk from flu complications.⁴ Additionally, ACIP found that flu virus in the new target population is responsible for healthcare utilization and lost work time by parents.

MAXIMIZING EFFICIENCY

In recent years, some healthcare providers have begun to maximize their vaccine supply with the use of low waste space syringes that utilize all the vaccine available.³ The Wall Street Journal reported in 2005 that Mount Sinai Hospital in New York “squeezed about 7,500 doses from its 6,000-shot stockpile by using special syringes that suck out all the vaccine from vials.”

Ensuring proper training for personnel who administer vaccine can also eliminate waste and improve efficiency.

Greater numbers of patients are currently being targeted for flu vaccination across the board. In addition to the CDC's recent action, the American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology issued new guidelines in May 2006 that encourage seasonal flu shots for all chronic heart disease patients.⁴

FLU SEASON

Flu season typically runs from November through April. The best way to protect against influenza is through flu vaccination, ideally in October or November.² However, anecdotal evidence shows demand for vaccine can surge as early as September.⁵ **Note:** It is best to vaccinate children earlier in the season, according to the CDC, as children younger than age 9 who are being vaccinated for the first time require two doses¹—one to introduce and the other to provide protection.

Additional Resources

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov/nip or (800) 232-2522
- The Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) at www.cdc.gov/mmwr/
- The Food & Drug Administration at www.fda.gov or (888) 463-6332
- The American Lung Association at www.lungusa.org or (212) 315-8700

Sources:

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Office of Communication, Press Release: “CDC's Advisory Committee Recommends Expanded Influenza Vaccinations for Children.” Feb. 23, 2006.
2. MMWR, June 28, 2006/55(Early Release):1-41. “Prevention and Control of Influenza, Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).”
3. Wall Street Journal, “Rush to Order Flu Vaccine Is ‘Feeding Frenzy.’” Betsy McKay and Gautam Naik. May 4, 2005.
4. USA Today, “Goal: Intensify Treatment for Heart Patients.” Steve Sternberg. May 15, 2006.
5. HIDA, Influenza Vaccine Production & Distribution Market Brief. Pg. 4. April 2006.

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