

June 30, 2016

ACIP recommends against using nasal spray influenza vaccine (FluMist) during the 2016-17 flu season

Actions Requested

- Be aware that the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommended that the nasal spray flu vaccine (FluMist) should **NOT** be used for anyone (children or adults) this coming 2016-17 flu season. This decision was based on review of studies that found that the nasal spray was much less effective than the injectable form.
- Do **not** order FluMist if you are purchasing flu vaccine for your clinic. If you have already placed an order, you should contact their distributor to ask about cancelling or replacing these doses.
- Continue to recommend annual influenza vaccination (using injectable forms) to your patients who are 6 months and older. You may need to explain to concerned patients that the injectable forms are still being recommended.

For questions, please contact our Communicable Disease staff at 360-337-5235.

Background

Last week, the ACIP reviewed data on the performance of live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV), also known as the nasal spray flu vaccine (sold as FluMist). The data indicated that vaccine efficacy among children 2-17 years was only 3%, which compares to 63% for the injectable inactivated influenza vaccine (IIV). These data follow both 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 data showing poor and/or lower than expected vaccine effectiveness for LAIV. Thus ACIP issued an **interim** recommendation that LAIV (Flu Mist) should **NOT** be used during the 2016-2017 flu season.

Although the Washington State Department of Health (WA DOH) Vaccines for Children (VFC) program already ordered FluMist as part of their childhood flu vaccine request for the coming 2016-17 flu season, they are working with CDC to order replacement doses. In addition to VFC providers, the ACIP recommendation may impact other healthcare providers who have already placed vaccine orders. CDC is coordinating with vaccine manufacturers to ensure enough supply is available to all state programs nationwide and to meet the demand from other healthcare providers.

Kitsap Public Health District (KPHD) supplies local VFC providers in Kitsap County with flu vaccine provided by DOH. We expect to be able to provide injectable inactivated influenza vaccine to our VFC providers. Please note that this likely means we'll have to use a number of flu vaccine types, brands and presentations; thus providers may have to use a variety of products. Along with DOH, we'll try to limit the number of brands and presentations in a practice and across large provider organizations. We will provide more information about this as soon as we are able.

We want to remind all providers that influenza is a serious disease that can cause severe illness and death, even in healthy people. During this past 2015-16 season, Kitsap County had 3 influenza-related deaths, including a child. Getting vaccinated is still the best protection against flu, especially for those at high risk for complications. ACIP continues to recommend annual flu vaccination, with either the IIV or recombinant influenza vaccine (RIV), for everyone 6 months and older.

Resources

- (1) CDC media release about ACIP findings: <http://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2016/s0622-laiv-flu.html>