



Department of Health

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TO: Health Care Providers, Hospitals, and Local Health Departments
FROM: New York State Department of Health, Bureau of Immunization

**HEALTH ADVISORY: 2016-2017 INFLUENZA SEASONAL VACCINE SUPPLY
DETERMINATION AS REQUIRED BY PUBLIC HEALTH LAW §2112**

Please distribute to the Infection Control Department, Emergency Department, Employee Health Services, Infectious Disease Department, Director of Nursing, Medical Director, Pharmacy Department, Pediatrics, Obstetrics and all primary care providers.

New York State Public Health Law (PHL) §2112 prohibits the administration of vaccines containing more than trace amounts of thimerosal, a mercury-containing preservative, to children less than 3 years of age and women who know they are pregnant, with certain exceptions. This law requires that the Commissioner of Health make a yearly determination of the adequacy of the supply of influenza vaccine that contains not more than 1.25 micrograms of mercury per 0.50 milliliter dose for women who know they are pregnant and not more than 0.625 micrograms of mercury per 0.25 milliliter dose for children less than 3 years of age.

The Commissioner of Health has determined that it appears that there will be an adequate supply of thimerosal-free seasonal influenza vaccine for the 2016-2017 influenza season for vaccination of pregnant women and children under the age of three years. **Therefore, health care providers (physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurse midwives) providing influenza vaccinations to pregnant women and children under 3 years of age should seek out and administer thimerosal-free seasonal influenza vaccine as soon as their thimerosal-free vaccine supplies arrive to ensure compliance with PHL § 2112.**

The Commissioner of Health, however, recognizes that in prior years, although the supply of thimerosal-free vaccine appeared adequate, some New York State health care providers did not receive shipments of thimerosal-free vaccine until later in the fall. **In those instances when health care providers have in good faith sought out influenza vaccine that complies with PHL §2112, but such vaccine cannot be obtained or has been ordered but not yet received, children less than 3 years of age and pregnant women should be vaccinated with available influenza vaccine.** If vaccine delays occur, providers should not wait for thimerosal-free influenza vaccine to immunize pregnant women or children less than 3 years of age. There is no proven risk from thimerosal-containing vaccine, and the substantial risk of complications or death from influenza disease in these groups outweighs the risk of vaccination¹⁻³.

Health care providers should document the attempts that were made to locate and obtain the vaccine and immunize their patients with available thimerosal containing vaccine. They should also be aware that a pregnant woman or parent/guardian of a child less than 3 three years of age must provide informed consent for the administration of vaccine that contains more than trace amounts of thimerosal.

At this time, some influenza vaccine shipments have already begun and influenza vaccine manufacturers report that they will continue to ship until all of the vaccine has been distributed. However, as in past years, some influenza vaccine manufacturers may complete vaccine shipments later than other manufacturers. The New York State Department of Health will monitor thimerosal-free influenza vaccine supplies throughout the season and may modify this determination if needed.

Additional Information

For additional information, please go to the NYSDOH webpage as noted below:

http://www.health.ny.gov/regulations/public_health_law/section/2112/information_for_physicians/

Additional information regarding influenza vaccine safety can be obtained at:

1. CDC. Thimerosal in Vaccines. <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/concerns/thimerosal/index.html>
2. CDC. Understanding Thimerosal, Mercury, and Vaccine Safety patient handout. <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/patient-ed/conversations/downloads/vacsafe-thimerosal-color-office.pdf>
3. CDC. Influenza (Flu) Vaccine Safety. <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/vaccines/flu-vaccine.html>
4. CDC. Vaccine Safety. <http://www.cdc.gov/od/science/iso/>

Additional information regarding influenza vaccine availability can be obtained at:

<http://www.izsummitpartners.org/ivats/>

For further information, please contact your local health department or your regional New York State Department of Health Bureau of Immunization representative at the following:

Western Regional Office

Buffalo / Rochester: 716 – 847 – 4501

Central New York Regional Office

Syracuse: 315 – 477 – 8164

Capital District Regional Office

Albany: 518 – 473 – 4437

Metropolitan Area Regional Office

New Rochelle: 914 – 654 – 7149

Central Islip: 631 – 851 – 3096

Monticello: 845 – 794 – 2045

For questions about ordering vaccine in New York State (outside of New York City), Vaccines for Children (VFC) providers can call 518 – 474 – 4578 or toll free at 800 – KID – SHOT during business hours.

Providers and facilities in **New York City** should contact the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene at 347 – 396 – 2400. For questions about ordering vaccine in New York City, VFC providers can call 347 – 396 – 2405 during business hours.