

2009 H1N1 vaccine for children aged 6 months to less than 10 years

The 2009 H1N1 vaccine is now ready to be rolled out to children aged 6 months to less than 10 years. The Ministry of Health (MOH) and the Health Sciences Authority (HSA) is satisfied with the safety profile of the CSL Limited Panvax H1N1 vaccine for children aged 6 months to less than 10 years after reviewing the safety of the vaccine for this age-group.

2 The recommendation for children below 10 years of age, as endorsed by the Expert Committee on Immunisation (ECI), is as follows:

- a. **For children from 3 to less than 10 years:** Two doses of 0.5 mL (15mcg), given at least 4 weeks apart.
- b. **For children from 6 months to less than 3 years:** Two doses of 0.25 mL (7.5 mcg), given at least 4 weeks apart.

3 A large number of H1N1 cases have occurred in the younger age groups. Twenty percent of individuals hospitalised for H1N1 illness or its complications were aged below 10 years while another 20% were aged between the ages of 10 and 19 years. Hence, we strongly encourage vaccination for children as they are at higher risk of developing influenza-related complications, especially if they have pre-existing chronic medical conditions e.g. asthma and other chronic lung diseases, heart diseases, epilepsy and other neurological and neuromuscular diseases, kidney diseases, blood disorders or diabetes.

4 While vaccination is voluntary, it is important to note that H1N1 vaccine can help to protect people from getting infected with the H1N1 influenza virus. An immune response that is expected to be protective against the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus can be generated after 2 weeks of administering the first dose of vaccine. A second dose given at least 4 weeks later is needed in children less than 10 years of age to ensure that immunity is sustained. Parents who are having their children vaccinated should be mindful of this lead time which is needed to build up immunity.

5 Those interested in vaccinating their children could obtain more detailed information on the H1N1 vaccine from their family doctors to make an informed decision. For their convenience, they are advised to make prior appointments for vaccination with the polyclinics and GP clinics (both PPCs and non-PPCs). The list is available at www.moh.gov.sg.

Pricing of Vaccine

6 The vaccines are supplied at cost to all polyclinics and GP clinics. The public is advised to check with the clinic on the pricing of the vaccine as charges may differ due to differences in administration, inventory and overhead cost of the vaccines.. Patients who cannot afford the vaccine can seek assistance from the polyclinics. No one will be denied essential vaccines because of their inability to pay.

7 The public can visit the MOH website at www.moh.gov.sg for more information on the H1N1 vaccine,

**MINISTRY OF HEALTH
HEALTH SCIENCES AUTHORITY**

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Ministry of Health, Singapore 2
College of Medicine Building
16 College Road
Singapore 169854
TEL (65) 6325 9220
FAX (65) 6224 1677
WEB www.moh.gov.sg