

Health Advisory: Delay in Injectable Influenza Vaccine Distribution, 6 October 2006

National distribution of injectable influenza vaccine early in the season is significantly less than expected and for some vaccinators is reportedly arriving in delayed, partial shipments. Vaccines for Children (VFC) supply is also affected by these delays. This situation is complicated by a lack of information available to public health authorities about the number of doses released and shipped by the various manufacturers and many distributors. The live attenuated nasal spray influenza vaccine (FluMist) is not affected by the delays and remains an excellent option for healthy persons between 5 and 49 years of age.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there will, eventually, be a record-breaking 115 million doses of influenza vaccine in the form of five FDA-licensed vaccines available this flu season. Although these projections could change as manufacturing continues the anticipated supply is sufficient to meet demand.

The most important messages for patients based on the information we have at this time are:

- Injectable influenza vaccine should eventually be plentiful this season, but is not widely available early on.
- Don't panic: Influenza season typically peaks after the New Year and continues into early spring.
- Patients should be vaccinated throughout the winter months.
- For healthy patients between 5 and 49 years of age, live attenuated nasal spray influenza vaccine (FluMist) is an excellent option.

Because the ultimate supply this season is anticipated to be adequate to meet the total demands, neither CDC nor Public Health are recommending prioritizing access to influenza vaccine. To assure you have enough vaccine to conduct public or mass flu clinics, Public Health recommends not scheduling vaccination clinics until you are assured of your vaccine supply is adequate.