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SANOVI PASTEUR'S FLUZONE[®], INFLUENZA VIRUS VACCINE

No-Preservative Pediatric Vaccine

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that 10 to 20 percent of Americans get sick with influenza during each "flu" season, which usually lasts from November to March.¹ Influenza is an acute, highly contagious infection of the respiratory tract that spreads easily from person-to-person through infectious respiratory secretion droplets caused by coughing or sneezing. Influenza virus types A and B are responsible for annual epidemics that can result in serious illness and complications, particularly in the elderly, those with chronic disease, infants up to the age of two years and pregnant women.² Each year between five and 15 percent of the general population is affected by influenza epidemic and between 3 and 5 million people are severely affected worldwide. Although most people recover from influenza, the CDC estimates that in the United States more than 226,000 people are hospitalized and about 36,000 people die from the flu and its complications every year.¹ Rates of infection are highest among children, and rates of serious illness and death occurs principally in persons aged over 65 years, children aged <2, and persons of any age suffering from a chronic medical condition which places them at increased risk for complications from influenza.³ During influenza epidemics, hospitalization rates in the <2 age group are similar to those seen among the elderly.^{2,4,5}

Influenza vaccination is the first line of defense used in the U.S. to prevent influenza.⁶ In addition to prevention, the vaccination

provides a 50- to 80-percent reduction of serious complications or death associated with the flu in high-risk individuals.⁷ The optimal time to vaccinate is usually during October through November. In general, anyone who wants to reduce their chances of getting influenza can get vaccinated; yet many Americans who are at high risk from influenza do not get vaccinated. In its 2005 annual report, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) provides updated information regarding control and prevention of influenza, and recommends key target groups for annual vaccination, which include: 1) persons at increased risk for influenza-related complications (persons aged ≥ 65 years, children aged 6-23 months, pregnant women and persons of any age with certain chronic medical conditions); 2) persons aged 50-64 years (this group has an increased incidence of certain chronic medical conditions; and 3) persons who live with or care for persons at high risk (healthcare workers and household contacts who have frequent contact with persons at high risk and who can transmit influenza to those persons at high risk).⁶ While vaccination levels increased significantly in the 1990s, greater vaccine coverage is still needed, particularly among persons aged <65 years, among children aged 6-23 months, and among healthcare workers.⁶ Towards that end, the ACIP further recommends that additional strategies, such as reminder systems or standing-orders programs, be put in place to further improve vaccination levels.⁶ Coverage can also be increased by

administering the vaccine to persons during routine health-care visits or hospitalizations before the influenza season, avoiding special trips to physicians' offices or clinics.

Sanofi Pasteur Inc. (Swifwater, PA), the nation's influenza vaccine leader, produces **Fluzone®**, **Influenza Virus Vaccine**, an inactivated influenza vaccine approved by the FDA, indicated for immunization against influenza disease caused by influenza virus types A and B in individuals from 6 months of age and older. The company is also proud to offer a new no-preservative pediatric formulation of its influenza vaccine for the immunization of infants aged 6 to 35 months—currently the only one of its kind. Sanofi Pasteur offers two other no-preservative options of Fluzone vaccine, including single-dose presentations with a 0.5-mL syringe or a 0.5-mL vial for persons ages 3 years and above, as well as a multi-dose vial with thimerosal as a preservative, licensed for those ages 6 months and above.

The annual epidemiological and economic consequences of influenza are substantial. Prevention of influenza through vaccination will not only reduce health-care costs and productivity losses, but will save lives and control the spread of the illness.


About Sanofi-Pasteur

Sanofi Pasteur, the vaccines business of the Sanofi-Aventis Group, sold nearly a billion doses of vaccine in 2004, making it possible to protect more than 500 million people across the globe, which is about 1.4 million per day. The company offers the broadest range of vaccines, providing protection against 20 bacterial and viral diseases. For more information, please visit: www.sanofipasteur.com.

Side effects of the vaccine generally do not last for more than 1 or 2 days and may include tenderness, redness, or hard lump at place of injection. Less common: aches or pains in muscles, fever, general feeling of discomfort or illness. As with any vaccine, this vaccine may not protect 100% of people who receive it. The vaccine only provides protection against certain strains of flu virus, the ones from which it was prepared, or those that are closely related.

Contraindications & Warnings:

Fluzone vaccine should not be administered to anyone with known systemic hypersensitivity reactions to egg proteins (eggs or egg products), to chicken proteins, or any component of Fluzone vaccine or a life-threatening reaction after previous administration of the vaccine or

a vaccine containing the same substances. Vaccination may be postponed in case of febrile or acute disease. Immunization should be delayed in a patient with an active neurologic disorder, but should be considered when the disease process has been stabilized. Fluzone should not be administered to individuals who have a prior history of Guillain-Barré syndrome. If Fluzone vaccine is used in persons deficient in producing antibodies, whether due to genetic defect, immunodeficiency disease, or immunosuppressive therapy, the expected antibody response may not be obtained. As with any vaccine, vaccination with Fluzone vaccine may not protect 100% of individuals. 

References:

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