

Is your son/daughter at least six months old?

He/she might like to join this important influenza vaccine study for children aged more than 6 months and young persons aged up to 18 years.

The best time to join is March 2009, but it is possible to join the study later in 2009 if places are still available.

If you and your son or daughter would like to contribute to our knowledge about influenza vaccines by joining the study please contact a member of my research team for more information. Their telephone numbers are on the back of the pamphlet.



For further information:

For further details about this important study please contact a member of my team

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Yours sincerely



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This study has been reviewed and approved by Royal Alexandra Hospital Ethics Committee (EC00268), The Children's Hospital at Westmead.
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influenza vaccine
study for children
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An important research project from
The National Centre for Immunisation
Research and Surveillance of Vaccine
Preventable Diseases (NCIRS), The
Children's Hospital at Westmead, Sydney.

A new research project from
the childr^{en}'s hospital at Westmead

Australia's National Centre for Immunisation Research at The Children's Hospital, Westmead is seeking healthy children aged six months or more and young people less than 18 years of age to volunteer for an important influenza vaccine study. All healthy children and young people can consider taking part in this study.

Influenza (The "flu")

Influenza is a highly contagious and potentially life-threatening viral infection that occurs in uncontrolled epidemics each winter. It is a major cause of respiratory illness and death worldwide. Recent studies have shown that young children, even if healthy, are more likely than adults to become infected and to develop serious complications that result in admission to hospital. These complications can include croup, bronchitis, middle ear infections, pneumonia and inflammation of the heart and brain. Each year, in Australia, influenza causes more than 80,000 GP visits, 15,000 hospital admissions and 1,500 deaths. The number of work days missed by parents of children suffering from flu can also create a significant cost to families and the community.

Influenza viruses mutate often and the vaccine must be changed frequently to match those mutations as closely as possible.

Influenza vaccines are recommended for children

Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent influenza. Influenza vaccines are licensed in Australia for use in anyone more than 6 months of age.

Healthy children and young people can benefit from vaccination against influenza because influenza is a significant cause of illness that prevents children and young people from attending school, sports and social events during winter.

On the advice of their medical experts, governments around the world are moving towards recommending the regular use of influenza vaccines for all healthy children and young people.

Western Australia already recommends that all children aged 6 months to 5 years receive influenza vaccine each year. Similarly, the United States of America and some parts of Canada recommend that everyone more than 6 months old receive influenza vaccination each year.

The vaccine contains killed influenza viruses. The killed viruses can not give you influenza, but they prepare your immune system to destroy influenza viruses when they infect you. The best time to be vaccinated is in March and April (before winter) but influenza vaccination can usefully be done well into winter.

Why is this study happening?

Although influenza vaccines have been in use for more than 40 years it is important to check that they are performing as well as they have always done.

CSL's Fluvax® has been, for many years, licensed in Australia for vaccinating people of all ages against influenza. Because it is being used more internationally, CSL now needs to collect extra information about the continuing safety of Fluvax® in children and young people.

Who can join the study?

- All healthy children aged at least 6 months
- All healthy young people up to 18 years of age

What will the study involve?

About 2000 healthy children and young people aged 6 months to 18 years will be invited to join the study. Every child or young person involved in the study will receive influenza vaccine (Fluvax®, 2009 formulation) in early 2009, preferably in March. It may be possible to join the study later in 2009 if places are still available.

Children aged less than nine years need to be given two doses of influenza vaccine one month apart. Those aged 9 to 18 years need only one dose of influenza vaccine. We will give you a diary on which to record notes about your child's health during the month after vaccination.

No blood samples are required in this study.

The study visits can be conducted at your home or at The Children's Hospital, Westmead according to your preference.

The vaccine will be provided free of charge. You will be reimbursed for any costs you might have as a result of participating in the study.

If you would like to contribute to our knowledge about influenza vaccines by including your son or daughter in the study, please contact my team.