



Bulletin No. 15  
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Influenza Vaccination

### **Immunization Action Month**

A governor's proclamation has designated September, 1974 as Immunization Action Month in Alaska. The goal of the program is to raise immunization levels among preschoolers against polio, measles, rubella, diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus.

Your assistance in this effort is requested. Working together we can achieve a better immunized population in Alaska.

### **Influenza Vaccination**

Although the influenza season is not yet upon us, now is the time to clarify and publicize the recommendations for influenza vaccination. Influenza occurs to some extent in Alaska every year, but its incidence and geographic distribution are variable. Periodically epidemic outbreaks occur usually when the antigens of prevalent influenza viruses change sufficiently to render the population susceptible. Type A and Type B influenza virus both may undergo changes in their antigens. Type A influenza epidemics are generally more frequent and more severe than those caused by Type B influenza. The immunization recommendations for this year are different from last year and incorporate a vaccine against a new strain of influenza Type A.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that people over 65 years of age or those with chronic cardiovascular, respiratory or metabolic disease be given influenza vaccine. This year's vaccine is bivalent and consists of Type A antigen A/Port Chalmers/1/73 and Type B antigen B/Hong Kong/5/72. As opposed to last year when two shots were recommended, this year only one shot of the bivalent vaccine should be given. In addition, those individuals allergic to egg protein should not be given vaccine.

### **Availability**

Regional Public Health Laboratories in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau will have limited quantities of vaccine in stock. Public Health Nurses should submit request well in advance. Private physicians may obtain vaccine from local sources.

### **Surveillance**

We would urge all physicians and nurses who make the diagnosis of influenza to notify the Department of Health so that adequate cultures may be obtained to confirm the diagnosis. Further information may be obtained by calling the Section of Communicable Disease Control, 272-7534.