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Bulletin No. 18
October 13, 1978

More on Influenza Vaccine Recommendations, 1978 - 1979

In the Bulletin of September 29 (Number 17), we explained that this season's influenza vaccine was being produced in two formulations - adult and youth. The only difference in these being that the youth formulations contained **more** of the A/USSR/77 antigen than the adult. This is because people less than 25 years of age have not had previous experience with this virus. Those people over 25 years of age usually have evidenced prior experience with the Russian strain and hence only need to boost their immunity.

It is now apparent that supplies of the youth formulation are not sufficient to meet demand and therefore the State Department of Health has been unable to obtain a significant amount of this vaccine. Because of this, we are recommending that the adult split virus formulation be given to **all** who meet the criteria for receiving influenza vaccine. Since the adult vaccine is actually less potent than the youth, there is no contraindication of immunizing children with the adult formulation. The only problem with this plan is that studies have indicated only 60% seroconversion in children given two doses of the adult vaccine compared to 80% when two doses of the youth vaccine was used. Below is a chart summarizing these recommendations.

INFLUENZA VACCINE DOSAGE BY AGE, 1978-1979
(When only adult split virus vaccine is available)

Vaccine Formulation	AGE	Dose (ml)	No. of Doses
Adult Split virus	26 yrs	0.5	1
	13-25 yrs	0.5	2-4 weeks or more apart
	3-12 yrs	0.25	2-4 weeks or more apart
	6 mos - 35 mos	0.15	2-4 weeks or more apart

Two points should be reiterated. Some physicians may have access to the youth formulation through various sources. If available, this should be given instead of the adult vaccine, according to the recommendations published in the last bulletin (Number 17). Also, it should be emphasized that **only persons over the age of 65 and those people at increased risk of adverse consequences from infections of the lower respiratory tract should receive influenza vaccine.**