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Influenza Virus Isolated in Fairbanks

The Virology-Rabies Laboratory has just reported the first influenza virus isolate of the 1980-81 influenza season. The virus appears to be A/Texas/77 (H3N2) which has been one of the prevalent influenza virus strains in the United States and Alaska since 1977. The virus was isolated from a student at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, who had a clinical illness typical of influenza occurring September 7, 1980. Dr. Elsner, from the Student Health Center at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, reported that a large number of students have been seen with flu-like illness in the past several weeks. Further viral samples are being obtained.

Recommendations - Influenza Vaccine 1980-81

Influenza vaccine for 1980-81 will consist of an inactivated trivalent preparation of antigens representative of the influenza viruses expected to be prevalent; A/Brazil/78 (H1N1), A/Bangkok/79 (H3N2), and B/Singapore/79. The vaccine contains 7 micrograms of hemagglutinin of each antigen in each 0.5 ml dose.

Persons 28 years and older will require only 1 dose of influenza vaccine. Because of lack of previous contact with H1N1 virus strains, persons less than 28 years of age who did not receive at least 1 dose of the 1978-79 or 1979-80 trivalent influenza vaccine will require 2 doses of the 1980-81 vaccine. Those who received 1978-79 or 1979-80 influenza vaccine will require only 1 dose. The vaccine is prepared by different manufacturers and is available as whole virion (whole virus) and subvirion (split virus) preparations. Split-virus vaccines have in the past been associated with somewhat fewer side effects than whole-virus vaccines in children. Therefore only split-virus vaccines are recommended for persons less than 13 years of age. The influenza vaccine dosage schedule for 1980-81 is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Influenza Vaccine* Dosage Recommendations by Age Group for 1980-1981

Age Group	Product	Dosage (ml)	Number of Doses
28 yrs and older	whole virion (whole virus) or subvirion (split virus)	0.5	1
13-27 years	whole virion (whole virus) or subvirion (split virus)	0.5	2**
3-12 years	Subvirion (split virus)	0.5	2**
6-35 months***	Subvirion (split virus)	0.25	2**

* Contains 7 µg each of A/Brazil/78 hemagglutinin antigens in each 0.5 ml.

** 4 weeks or more between doses; both doses essential for good protection, unless the individual received at least 1 dose of 1978-79 or 1979-80 vaccine. In latter instance, 1 dose is sufficient.

*** Based on limited data. Since the likelihood of febrile convulsions is greater in this age group, special care should be taken in weighing relative risks and benefits.

Vaccine Usage

Influenza vaccination is strongly recommended for all individuals at increased risk of adverse consequences from infections of the lower respiratory tract. Such conditions include (1) acquired or congenital heart disease, (2) any chronic disorder with compromised pulmonary function, (3) chronic renal disease; (4) diabetes mellitus and other metabolic diseases, (5) chronic severe anemia, (6) conditions which compromise the immune mechanism, (7) older persons, particularly those over age 65.