Information for Sponsors, Parents, Guardians, Students, DoDEA School Staff, and all Stakeholders,

DoDEA Adds Influenza Vaccine to Required List

WHAT? Influenza Vaccine Requirement
DoDEA follows recommendations provided by the Centers of Disease Control Prevention’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommendations and the DoD joint military medical services regulation on immunizations. Consequently, DoDEA added the influenza vaccine to the required immunizations.

WHEN? Fall 2016
The requirement goes into effect starting fall of 2016 due to be compliant by December 1, 2016. Each subsequent year the annual/seasonal or pandemic influenza vaccine is a requirement due by December 1 to safeguard the military communities and improve school attendance.

WHO? DoDEA Students
Students attending DoDEA schools in Americas, Europe, and Pacific are required to receive the annual influenza vaccine.

WHY? Influenza is preventable, health improves student achievement
The annual influenza vaccine is the best defense against influenza.

Why add another vaccine and what are the benefits of the flu vaccine?
Improved health and safety reduces absenteeism. Reduction in absenteeism improves student academic achievement. Student safety in schools and in the military families remains a top priority for DoDEA. Vaccination against influenza (seasonal or pandemic) is still the primary method of minimizing the transmission of infections within the school population and the community. The military community is a highly transient one, which increases the potential for exposure and the spread of infectious diseases such as influenza. The addition of the influenza vaccine aligns with the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommendations and the Department of Defense Joint Military Medical Services regulation on immunizations.

Why is flu vaccine important?
Influenza is a highly transmissible infection. Getting the flu vaccination protects you and other family members from influenza, particularly young children and other relatives who may be in the ‘at-risk groups’ due to illness or being too young (infants).

Why is the due date December 1, can the due date be delayed?
It takes about 2 weeks for protection to develop after vaccination. The due date of 1 December is to ensure the immunization is completed before the winter school break when families travel more, so they will be protected during long hours in a small confined airplane (this is an environment where airborne virus are easily transmitted causing illnesses). Also, families tend to
be busy with holiday planning and activities and not attending to vaccine needs during school break.

**Do all DoDEA schools require flu vaccines?**
USEUCOM Command Surgeon General has made the annual flu vaccine a requirement for DoDEA schools in Europe since 2010. Starting 2016 the flu vaccine is required in all DoDEA schools in the Pacific, Americas and Europe. The military community and DoDEA students are unique in being highly mobile, which increases the potential for exposure to infectious agents.

**Does the base clinic/MTF have enough vaccines?**
DoDEA HQ and the Defense Health Agency (DHA) have collaborated in notifying the base clinics. The past practice has been that active duty members are immunized first, then the dependents and others in the community. This year there is no shortage in the vaccine supply and medical officials at DHA have confirmed that all installations will be able to obtain the vaccine.

**Who administers the flu shots?**
All vaccinations are administered by base clinic/MTF staff for military dependent children; DoDEA schools do not administer vaccines. Vaccine administration schedule will be arranged by the base medical treatment facilities, and completed by no later than December 1, each year. Often the base MTF will set up a flu clinic for the military dependents on base.

**Is the flu vaccine given in mist form like last year?**
For the season 2016-17 the FluMist has been removed per the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, American Academy of Pediatrics and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendation due to low effectiveness. This season the flu vaccine mist is not available.

**My family never gets the flu shot; we don’t want to start now, what are my options?**
DoDEA accepts medical and religious waivers. The medical waiver can be recommended by your medical provider. An Immunization Exemption Request Form (Form H-2-2) needs to be signed by both parent and medical provider. This form needs to be given to the school nurse for documentation purposes. A legitimate religious waiver may be requested and a signed each school year the request is made, use (Form H-2-2). In the event of an epidemic, for the protection of others, the exempt student will be excluded from school, including sports, and all school activities until the installation medical professional determines the epidemic period is over.

**How do I get a waiver form for the flu vaccine?**
The flu vaccine is no different than any other vaccine when it comes to compliance. You need to see your school nurse if you want a waiver for any of the DoDEA required vaccines. The military community is a highly transient one, which increases the potential for exposure and the spread of infectious diseases such as influenza. Reducing the spread of preventable infections
in schools and the military community improves students’ health, safety and attendance. Improved health and safety reduces absenteeism, a reduction in absenteeism improves student academic achievement.

**If I’m allergic to eggs, can I still get the flu vaccine?**

It depends on the degree of allergy; people with a history of egg allergy who have experienced only hives after exposure to egg should receive influenza vaccine. Not all flu vaccines are developed in an egg based culture; egg free vaccine may be available if you need it. Best practice is to talk with your primary care provider.

**Where can I get more information and who should I talk to?**

Talk to your school nurse, she can provide details about the flu requirement and vaccine information. You can also talk to your primary care provider relating to any health concerns regarding the flu vaccine. Also contact the base MTF immunization clinic for details on when the vaccine will be available for dependents, and if there is a plan on your base to schedule a flu clinic.

**Can I get the flu shot anywhere, or do I have to go to a base clinic?**

It is your choice where you get the flu vaccine. Off base medical providers may charge a fee, ask your Tricare or other medical insurance for benefit information. You do need to bring a signed, dated, and stamped documentation of the vaccine immunization to the school nurse for documentation purposes.

**What if the medical facility does not have the vaccine or cannot immunize by December 1, 2016?**

DoDEA school nurses will work with parents individually in cases where the local MTF does not have capacity to immunize students by December 1, 2016. Students will not be disenrolled if the MTF cannot provide the immunization by December 1, 2016.