

Distribution: As Appendix 1

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Category: Immediate

Title: Update on Pneumovax 23® vaccine supplies

What is this about: Supply management of 23-valent polysaccharide pneumococcal vaccines (Pneumovax 23®) pre-filled syringes (Merck Sharp and Dohme Limited).

Issue This provides an update on CEM/CMO/2020/26 issued on 29 October 2020 about vaccine ordering arrangements in place for the UK and clinical prioritisation guidance for patients.

Updates are shown in bold

Summary

- **Supplies of Pneumovax® 23 pre-filled syringes (PFS) remain very limited and are expected to be out of stock from mid-November until January 2021 due to increased demand.**
- **Clinical prioritisation guidance included below will continue to apply to support practitioners during this time. This includes immediate actions to take now and in the event of no vaccine being available.**
- Maximum ordering quotas have been put in place for the UK with Merck Sharp and Dohme Limited and the wholesaler AAH to ensure equitable and appropriate distribution during this period.
- Please note, there is an override procedure in place for these quotas to fulfil orders for individuals in high risk clinical groups as outlined in the guidance.

Actions Required

To ensure that the limited supplies of Pneumovax® 23 PFS are preserved for those individuals with the highest clinical need, all relevant healthcare professionals in primary, secondary or specialist healthcare services should work to ensure the following actions are undertaken where applicable:

- **Ensure all remaining stock on shelves is prioritised for the vaccination of high risk patients as per the clinical prioritisation guidance. See Annex below.**
- **Order vaccine stock only for patients included in the clinical prioritisation guidance.**

Obtaining supplies

- Supplies of Pneumovax 23® pre-filled syringes can only be ordered from the wholesaler AAH.
- Healthcare professionals who wish to place orders, should contact AAH via their usual channels.
- If further assistance is required, please contact AAH customer services help desk on 0344 561 2266.

Further information

Due to increased demand, supplies of pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPV23) marketed by MSD as Pneumovax® 23 in pre-filled syringes remain limited and will be out of stock from mid-November until early January 2021. Clinicians should continue to prioritise vaccination according to the recommendations below.

PPV23 is recommended for:

- individuals aged from 2 years or over in clinical risk groups
- all individuals aged 65 years and over.

A single lifetime dose is recommended for most individuals. Five yearly boosters are recommended for asplenic patients and those with chronic kidney disease. **PPV23 should not be routinely administered in hospitals to patients with COVID-19 infection for the prevention of secondary bacterial pneumonia. This is because the immune response is unlikely to be sufficiently rapid and limited evidence of secondary infection with *Streptococcus pneumoniae* in COVID-19 patients.**

Advice on how to manage the PPV23 programme:

1. If you are able to procure stock, the priority should be to offer vaccine to those newly diagnosed with conditions in the high priority group followed by those in moderate priority groups who have never received PPV23 (see the table below). When such individuals are first identified, if no vaccine is available, please ensure that their records are flagged in order to call them for a future appointment. Also ensure that other aspects of management are optimised and in place (for example antibiotic prophylaxis, or booster doses of PCV13) – as advised in relevant guidance, or by the specialist clinician caring for patient.
2. Any PPV23 dose that the surgery is able to access should be offered opportunistically to high and moderate priority groups attending an appointment at the surgery who have never received PPV23 and are due this vaccine.
3. PPV23 vaccination for lower priority groups (including healthy individuals aged 65 years and over) and booster doses for asplenic, those with splenic dysfunction and chronic kidney disease are less urgent and can be planned when sufficient stock is available.

Providers should work together to ensure remaining stocks of PPV23 are where possible, made available to those who will benefit the most. This may require transfer of stock between providers. Advice can be found on Public Health Wales [immunisation web pages](#).

National stocks of PCV13 (Prevenar13), or separately procured PCV10 (Synflorix), should not be used in place of PPV23 because herd protection from the childhood PCV13 programme has reduced pneumococcal disease due to these serotypes across all ages, including the elderly. PPV23 helps provide additional protection against serotypes that are not covered by PCV13 or PCV10.

Annex

Priority groups

Clinical risk group

Examples (decision based on clinical judgement)

High priority

Asplenia or dysfunction of the spleen.

This also includes conditions such as homozygous sickle cell disease and coeliac syndrome that may lead to splenic dysfunction.

Immunosuppression

Due to disease or treatment, including patients undergoing chemotherapy leading to immunosuppression, bone marrow transplant, asplenia or splenic dysfunction, HIV infection at all stages, multiple myeloma or genetic disorders affecting the immune system (e.g. IRAK-4, NEMO, complement deficiency) Individuals on or likely to be on systemic steroids for more than a month at a dose equivalent to prednisolone at 20mg or more per day (any age), or for children under 20kg, a dose of 1mg or more per kg per day.

Individuals with cerebrospinal fluid leaks

This includes leakage of cerebrospinal fluid such as following trauma or major skull surgery.

Individuals with cochlear implants

It is important that immunisation does not delay the cochlear implantation.

Moderate priority

Chronic respiratory disease

This includes chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), including chronic bronchitis and emphysema; and such conditions as bronchiectasis, cystic fibrosis, interstitial lung fibrosis, pneumoconiosis and bronchopulmonary dysplasia (BPD). Children with respiratory conditions caused by aspiration, or a neurological disease (e.g. cerebral palsy) with a risk of aspiration. Asthma is not an indication, unless so severe as to require

continuous or frequently repeated use of systemic steroids (as defined in Immunosuppression below).

Chronic heart disease

This includes those requiring regular medication and/or follow-up for ischaemic heart disease, congenital heart disease, hypertension with cardiac complications, and chronic heart failure.

Chronic kidney disease

Nephrotic syndrome, chronic kidney disease at stages 4 and 5 and those on kidney dialysis or with kidney transplantation.

Chronic liver disease

This includes cirrhosis, biliary atresia and chronic hepatitis.

Diabetes

Diabetes mellitus requiring insulin or oral hypoglycaemic drugs. This does not include diabetes that is diet controlled.

Low Priority

Healthy individuals aged 65 years and over

To: NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership to forward to:

All General Practitioners - please ensure this message is seen by all practice nurses and non-principals working in your practice and retain a copy in your 'locum information pack'.

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Cc: Health Boards and NHS Trusts:

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Onward distribution to:

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Cc: Public Health Wales:

Chief Executive
Director of Public Health Services
Consultants in Communicable Disease Control
Microbiologists
Consultant Epidemiologists
Head of Vaccine Preventable Disease Programme

Cc: GPC (Wales)