

Health-care Providers and Patients 65 Years and Older - Options Available in the Fight Against Influenza Disease

Fluzone[®] High-Dose, Influenza Virus Vaccine is Licensed, Recommended, and Covered by Medicare Part B, and Available for the 2011-2012 Influenza Season

Adults 65 years of age and older are among the groups hardest hit by influenza and annual vaccination remains the best protection, particularly for this population. However, as people age, their immune function tends to decrease, which makes older adults not only more susceptible to infections, but also less responsive to vaccination. Although this group has the highest rates of annual immunization, they may not respond to standard-dose influenza vaccines as well as younger adults.¹ In the US it is estimated that 90% of the annual deaths attributed to influenza and its complications occur in people 65 years of age and older.²

In December 2009, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) licensed sanofi pasteur's *Fluzone High-Dose vaccine*, which contains an increased amount of antigen compared to standard-dose influenza vaccines. *Fluzone High-Dose vaccine* is designed to generate a stronger antibody response in people 65 years of age and older which may result in better protection against influenza disease for this population. Please click here to view the full FDA announcement: <http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/2009/ucm195483.htm>.

The 2010-2011 annual influenza vaccination recommendations issued by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and the 2011 Adult Immunization schedule have included *Fluzone High-Dose vaccine* among the vaccines recommended for adults 65 years of age and older. Please click here to view the ACIP recommendations for the use of *Fluzone High-Dose vaccine* and the 2011 Adult Immunization Schedule:

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5916a2.htm>

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/schedules/downloads/adult/adult-schedule.pdf>.

In 2010, *Fluzone High-Dose vaccine* became a covered benefit under Medicare Part B. *Fluzone High-Dose vaccine* already has a CPT^{®a} Code (90662) and a separate reimbursement rate posted on the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) fee schedule. *For questions regarding insurance coverage, the Reimbursement Support Service is available at 1-800-VACCINE (1-800-822-2463) and select prompt 2.*

Fluzone High-Dose vaccine now provides health-care providers another important option in the fight against influenza for patients 65 years of age and older. Health-care providers can now reserve *Fluzone High-Dose vaccine* in preparation for the upcoming 2011-2012 influenza season. Please [\[call/click here\]](#) for additional information regarding this vaccine or how this vaccine can be reserved.

^a CPT = Current Procedural Terminology is a registered trademark of the American Medical Association.

References: 1. Monto AS, Ansaldi F, Aspinall R, et al. Influenza control in the 21st century: optimizing protection of older adults. *Vaccine*. 2009;27:5043 2. Poland GA, Mulligan MJ. The imperative of influenza vaccines for elderly individuals—an evolving story. *J Infect Dis*. 2009;200:61-163.