

*From the Chief Medical Officer*  
Dr Michael McBride



Department of

**Health, Social Services  
and Public Safety**

[www.dhsspsni.gov.uk](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk)

AN ROINN

**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta  
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

MÄNNYSTRIE O

**Poustie, Resydènter Heisin  
an Fowk Siccar**

Castle Buildings  
Stormont Estate  
Belfast BT4 3SQ  
Tel: 028 9052 0563  
Fax: 028 9052 0574  
Email: [michael.mcbride@dhsspsni.gov.uk](mailto:michael.mcbride@dhsspsni.gov.uk)

Your Ref:

Our Ref: HSS(MD)29/2008

Date: 29 July 2008

HSS(MD)29/2008

To: Chief Executives HSS Boards  
Directors of Public Health HSS Boards  
Consultants in Communicable Disease Control  
Directors of Nursing HSS Boards  
Directors of Pharmaceutical Services - Boards  
Regional Epidemiologists, CDSC (NI)  
Occupational health physicians

Dear Colleague

## **SEASONAL INFLUENZA IMMUNISATION PROGRAMME FOR POULTRY WORKERS 2008/2009**

1. This letter provides information about the arrangements for this year's seasonal influenza vaccination programme for poultry workers. For the arrangements for the general seasonal influenza immunisation programme please see "Seasonal Influenza Immunisation Programme for 2008/2009" HSS(MD) /2008.
2. From October 2008, to coincide with the seasonal flu programme, each Health & Social Services Board is required to make arrangements to ensure as far as possible that poultry workers in their geographic area are offered seasonal influenza vaccine. The immunisation is not compulsory. This is the third year that we have run such a programme and this policy is in line with the rest of the UK. The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has endorsed this advice. The Department will support Boards through the provision of advice and information materials. More information on this programme can be found in the attached Annexes.

### **Rationale for offering flu vaccine to Poultry Workers**

3. Offering poultry workers the seasonal flu vaccination is a precautionary public health measure to reduce the risk of poultry workers contracting both avian and human influenza simultaneously. This would reduce the theoretical risk for circulating human influenza virus to re-assort with avian influenza virus, thereby producing a new influenza virus which could have pandemic potential.

Seasonal influenza vaccine protects against seasonal human influenza but does not protect against avian influenza.

## Funding arrangements

4. Additional money has been allocated in 2007-08 to the HSS Boards' baseline for a seasonal flu immunisation programme for poultry workers based on figures in 2007/8. The amount allocated to each Board by the Department is not on a per capita basis, and is based on information on the geographic distribution of poultry premises and bird keepers provided by Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD).

Boards are asked to consider putting in place a LES for poultry workers, which is in line with national policy. A draft LES outline is attached (Annex 3). A benchmark rate of £7.51 has been set for administering this vaccine, in line with the current rate for flu immunisation. Boards should therefore reimburse those who have been commissioned to provide this service up to £7.51 as an item of service payment or if it chooses as a cost per vaccination. In addition the allocation to Boards covers the payment of a data collection and return fee of £1.75 per patient. It should be offered free of charge to those workers who satisfy the criteria listed in Annex 1.

## Vaccine Supply arrangements

5. Influenza vaccine for the 2008/2009 Influenza Immunisation Programme has been centrally purchased by the Department from three influenza vaccine manufacturers, namely Solvay Healthcare, Wyeth and Novartis Vaccines. Flu vaccine supply arrangements are the same as for this year's (2008/09) flu campaign (ie through Movianto formerly Castlereagh Pharmaceuticals).

## How to Order

6. Orders for influenza vaccine must be placed **only** with **Movianto Ireland** - formerly Castlereagh Pharmaceuticals - (contact details below) either by telephone, fax or by e-mail. Opening hours: 9:00am to 5:00pm (Monday to Friday).

Where possible, it is preferred that all orders from GP practices are **faxed or e-mailed**, using the attached form (Annex 9) to:

### **Movianto Ireland**

*6a Prince Regent Road  
Belfast BT5 6QR*

**Tel: 028 9079 5799**

**Fax: 028 9079 6303**

**E-mail: [orders.nireland@movianto.com](mailto:orders.nireland@movianto.com)**

Initial orders for your first delivery of influenza vaccine 2008/2009 can be placed with **Movianto Ireland from w/c 18 August 2008**. Additional orders can be placed from week commencing 6 October 2008

## Vaccine uptake data collection

7. For this vaccination programme, each Board is asked to supply a minimum data set on the uptake of seasonal flu immunisation by poultry workers for local and regional monitoring purposes. This should be returned directly to Health Protection Team, Room C.4.22, Castle Buildings, DHSSPS. Email: [health.protection@dhsspsni.gov.uk](mailto:health.protection@dhsspsni.gov.uk).

Data collection needs to be consistent across the Board areas, and directed to a single source for reporting purposes. A proforma to be used for data collation and return is attached (Annex 4). A draft template to assist individuals/organisations delivering the programme in recording details of individual workers immunised is also attached (Annex 5).

## Consent

8. Health professionals must ensure that for each person who attends an immunisation session, appropriate information and advice about the influenza vaccine is given and that the person's consent is obtained. Individuals coming forward for immunisation should be given a reasonable opportunity to discuss any concerns before being immunised.

## Monitoring Safety

9. If a doctor, nurse, or pharmacist suspects that any adverse reaction to one of the influenza vaccines has occurred, it should be reported to the Commission in Human Medicines (CHM) using the Yellow Card reporting scheme [www.yellowcard.gov.uk](http://www.yellowcard.gov.uk)

## Influenza Vaccine Composition for 2008/2009

10. Flu vaccine strains are recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO) following careful mapping of flu viruses as they move around the world. This monitoring is continuous and allows experts to make predictions of which strains are most likely to cause influenza outbreaks in the northern hemisphere in the coming winter.

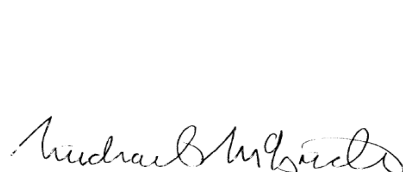
The WHO recommends that vaccines to be used in the 2008/2009 season (northern hemisphere winter) contain the following:

- an A/Brisbane/59/2007 (H1N1)-like virus;
- an A/Brisbane/10/2007 (H3N2)-like virus;
- a B/Florida/4/2006-like virus.

For more information please visit:

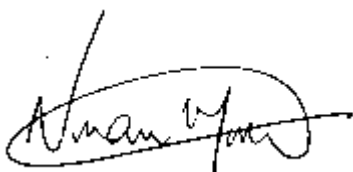
[http://www.who.int/csr/disease/influenza/recommendations2008\\_9north/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/csr/disease/influenza/recommendations2008_9north/en/index.html)

Yours sincerely



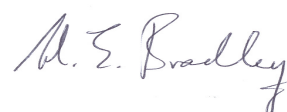
---

**Dr M McBride**  
Chief Medical Officer



---

**Dr N Morrow**  
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer



---

**Mr M Bradley**  
Chief Nursing Officer

cc Mr A McCormick, Permanent Secretary  
Dr E Mitchell, Deputy Chief Medical Officer  
Mr D Hill, Deputy Secretary, DHSSPS  
Mrs Linda Brown, Deputy Secretary, DHSSPS  
Mr A Elliott, Director of Health Development, DHSSPS  
Dr L Doherty, Senior Medical Officer/ Consultant Epidemiologist, DHSSPS  
Ms C Jendoubi, Director of Primary Care, DHSSPS  
Mr J Farrell, Principal, GMS Contract Unit, DHSSPS  
Ms K Simpson, Health Protection Team, DHSSPS  
Dr B Gaffney, Health Promotion Agency  
Dr B Dunn, Chair, GPC, BMA  
Prescribing Advisers, HSS Boards  
Regional Drug and Poisons Information Service  
Dr Jill Mairs, Regional Procurement Pharmacist  
Occupational Health Departments Boards  
NICS Occupational Health  
Mr P Tiffney, Movianto Ireland

This letter is available at [www.dhsspsni.gov.uk](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk) and also on the DHSSPS Extranet which can be accessed directly at <http://extranet.dhsspsni.gov.uk> or by going through the HPSS Web at <http://www.n-i.nhs.uk> and clicking on DHSSPS.

### Seasonal Influenza Immunisation Programme for Poultry Workers

#### Action

1. From October 2008, to coincide with the seasonal flu programme, each Health & Social Services Board is required to make arrangements to ensure as far as possible that poultry workers in their geographic area are offered seasonal influenza vaccine. The immunisation is not compulsory. It should be offered free of charge to those workers who satisfy the criteria (see paragraph 2).

#### Target Population

2. The following definition of a 'poultry worker' has been devised based on the risk of exposure to avian influenza (bird flu) virus for the purposes of this scheme. This definition forms the basis of selection and includes:
  - a) An individual who while on poultry premises and in the course of his or her employment (including self employment):
    - (i) Accesses enclosed poultry rearing or egg production areas;
    - (ii) Performs initial sorting of poultry eggs if the sorting area is an integral part of the production unit;
    - (iii) Catches or culls poultry within enclosed poultry rearing or egg production areas; or
    - (iv) Performs the final clean down of poultry sheds following depopulation of a poultry house
  - b) an individual who while on poultry premises and in the course of his or her employment (including self-employment) collects or removes poultry manure or litter from within enclosed poultry rearing or egg production areas of poultry premises; or
  - c) an individual who while on poultry premises and in the course of his or her employment (including self-employment):
3. Poultry in this context means poultry and other captive birds.
4. Poultry premises in this context means:
  - a) those premises/ units which have 50 or more birds; or
  - b) premises which are a slaughterhouse and for this purpose "slaughterhouse" means an establishment used for slaughtering poultry, the meat of which is intended for human consumption.

## Exclusions

5. The following workers are **not** considered to be at higher than normal risk of exposure to avian influenza (bird flu) viruses and are not included in this programme:
  - Workers in poultry premises/units that have less than 50 birds i.e. 49 or fewer;
  - Workers in and around farms that have registered poultry units, but do not enter the enclosed poultry management areas or egg sorting facilities;
  - Workers delivering materials to poultry units;
  - Workers collecting or delivering eggs or poultry (live or dead) from poultry premises (unless undertaking duties included in (a) (iii) above);
  - Workers in poultry processing units handling poultry carcasses but not involved in killing or eviscerating poultry (unless also undertaking duties included in (c) (iii) above).
  - Workers in non-approved poultry slaughterhouses.
  - Bird swabbers who take samples or swab dead shot birds, and other dead birds as part of the avian influenza surveillance of wild birds.
6. Poultry premises with fewer than 50 birds are not included, nor are people who only work on such premises. This is based on epidemiological evidence of avian influenza in people in the outbreaks in SE Asia and other countries, which shows that intense and very close contact with infected birds is needed for people to become infected with avian influenza. Such contact does not usually occur in small flocks of fewer than 50 birds. If avian influenza risks increase, or there is an outbreak locally, then the risk will be reviewed.

## Pregnant Women

7. Poultry workers should defer vaccination in the first trimester to avoid wrongly associating spontaneous abortion or the later identification of birth defects with flu vaccination. However, there is no evidence of risk from vaccinating pregnant women at any stage of pregnancy. Nor is breastfeeding a contraindication. Women who have a medical condition such as severe asthma, that increases their risk of complications from influenza, should be vaccinated regardless of the stage of pregnancy.

## Contraindications

8. The vaccine should not be given to those who;
  - Are allergic to hen's eggs
  - Have had a serious reaction to flu vaccine in the past
  - Currently have flu symptoms, e.g. a temperature of 39C and above
  - Have already had a flu immunisation for that (flu) season

Further information about contraindications to the flu vaccine is contained in chapter 19 of the new *2006 Immunisation against infectious disease* (the Green Book).

## Registry of Poultry Premises

9. Northern Ireland Bird Register  
Unlike the rest of the UK, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) in Northern Ireland requires all keepers of birds to register on the Northern Ireland Bird Register, with the exception of caged pet birds kept in the owner's home.

Keepers with 49 or fewer birds are not covered by this programme.

10. Food Standard Agency Register (FSA)  
All approved poultry slaughter and processing premises are required to register with the FSA.

## Identifying poultry workers

11. The majority of poultry workers (including catchers and cullers who work on registered poultry premises) can be identified through their place of employment using the statutory databases held by DARD and the FSA in Northern Ireland.
12. A contact list of registered poultry premises/units (housing 50 or more birds) and lists of hatcheries and egg packing stations will be provided to each HSS Board enabling access to information within its geographic area. This information will only be issued to the Consultant in Communicable Disease Control within each HSSB who is the identified lead for the poultry workers vaccination programme for that HSSB.

## Data Protection responsibilities

13. The information on poultry premises/units will be provided by confidential agreement to DHSSPS by DARD.
14. The information provided has been passed to DHSSPS on behalf of the HSS Boards, on the understanding that the data will not be used for any other purpose and can only be used under the following conditions:
  - The data will not be used for any purpose other than for the purposes of this poultry workers vaccination programme 2008-09.
  - The data will not be copied at all to any person or body other than those directly assigned to this purpose within DHSSPS and the Health Boards.
  - No material will be published or distributed other than to those directly assigned to this purpose within DHSSPS and the Health Boards.

## **Contacting poultry workers, catchers and cullers and issuing appointments**

### 15. Poultry workers

Each Board should decide how best to contact poultry premises/units including poultry slaughterhouses, egg packing stations and hatcheries in their area in order to make arrangements to ensure poultry workers who want to be immunised are offered the vaccine and in order to determine the number of individuals to be vaccinated. This will assist in planning, including the ordering of vaccine supplies. A draft letter which could be used for this purpose is attached (Annex 4).

### 16. Bird Keepers

The HSS Boards should decide how best to issue a letter to all bird keepers on the DARD Bird register with 50 or more birds advising them of the vaccination programme. A draft letter is provided at Annex 4.

## **Funding and contractual agreements**

17. Boards are asked to consider putting in place a LES for poultry workers, which is in line with national policy . A draft LES outline is attached (Annex 5).
18. The DHSSPS has made available additional resources to Boards to meet the costs of implementing this poultry workers vaccination programme. This money is already in the Boards baseline based on 2007-08 figures. The amount allocated to each Board by the Department is not on a per capita basis, and is based on information of the geographic distribution of poultry premises and bird keepers provided by Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD).
19. A benchmark rate of £7.51 has been set for administering this vaccine, in line with the current rate for flu immunisation. Boards should therefore reimburse those who have been commissioned to provide this service up to £7.51 as an item of service payment or if it chooses as a cost per vaccination. In addition the allocation to Boards includes for the payment of a data collection and return fee based at £1.75 per patient.

## **Vaccine uptake data collection**

20. For this vaccination programme, each Board is asked to supply a minimum data set on the uptake of seasonal flu immunisation by poultry workers for local and regional monitoring purposes. This should be returned directly to Health Protection Team, Room C.4.22, Castle Buildings, DHSSPS. Email: [health.protection@dhsspsni.gov.uk](mailto:health.protection@dhsspsni.gov.uk).
21. Data collection needs to be consistent across the Board areas, and directed to a single source for reporting purposes. A proforma to be used for data collation and return is attached (Annex 6). A draft template to assist individuals/organisations delivering the programme in recording details of individual workers immunised is also attached (Annex 7).



## Obtaining consent

22. It is essential that appropriate information and advice about the influenza vaccine is given and that the person's consent is given. Individuals coming forward for vaccination should be given a reasonable opportunity to discuss any concerns before being immunised. For further information on consent, please see the 2006 edition of Immunisation against infectious disease (the Green Book) at <http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Policyandguidance/Healthandsocialcaretopics/Greenbook/> D H\_409 7254
23. In the event of a poultry worker being vaccinated in a setting/by a service provider other than their own GP, a sample data release form to inform the poultry worker's GP of vaccination is attached as Annex 8.

## Information Materials

24. A Question and Answer sheet on the programme has been supplied as Annex 9 and an information sheet for poultry workers has been included at Annex 10. Boards should provide copies of this information sheet to relevant service providers delivering this vaccination programme. Translations into Latvian, Polish, Portuguese and Russian of the information sheet for poultry workers are available to view and download from the Department's website at [www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/phealth](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/phealth). Other alternative formats or translations of this information sheet will be considered upon request, please contact David Nugent on 028 90 522059.

**DRAFT TEXT OF POSSIBLE LETTER TO BE SENT TO REGISTERED POULTRY PREMISES/ UNITS WITH 50 OR MORE BIRDS 2008/09**

Dear

I am writing to you, as a registered poultry keeper of more than 50 birds, to advise you that you and your workers at your poultry premise/ unit may be entitled to a free seasonal flu jab as part of the Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety's seasonal influenza immunisation of poultry workers programme.

The free flu vaccination is available to poultry workers working in a registered premise/ unit with 50 or more birds **and** who satisfy certain criteria, i.e. workers who

- spend a lot of time in areas where poultry are kept for rearing or egg production purposes
- handle live poultry
- catch poultry in poultry houses
- sort eggs in poultry houses
- clean poultry houses
- collect and remove poultry manure or litter from poultry houses
- slaughter poultry and remove the guts and other parts from dead poultry
- clean and disinfect live bird and evisceration areas in slaughter houses

Seasonal flu vaccine protects against seasonal influenza and does not protect against avian (bird) flu. By protecting poultry workers against human flu, the very slight risk that the worker could catch human flu and bird flu at the same time is reduced. If a poultry worker became infected with both human and bird flu viruses at the same time, then there is a very slight risk that the two viruses could mix in their body to create a new and potentially serious flu virus with pandemic potential.

Seasonal flu is an illness caused by a virus. Because flu viruses are always changing, people need the new vaccine each year. You are recommended to have your free flu jab in October or November before the main flu season.

I attach some information 'if you work with poultry', which you may find useful. If you or your fellow workers wish to proceed with flu vaccination please contact [**insert local arrangements**].

Yours faithfully

## POULTRY WORKERS VACCINATION PROGRAMME 2008/09

### DRAFT LOCAL ENHANCED SCHEME (LES) ADDRESSING IMMUNISATION OF POULTRY WORKERS IN GP PRACTICES WITH SEASONAL FLU VACCINE

#### Background

Current estimates indicated that there are approximately 4000-5000 poultry workers, as defined below, in Northern Ireland. National UK guidance advises that these workers should now be offered seasonal influenza vaccine.

The immunisation is not compulsory and should be offered free of charge to the poultry workers who are registered with the practice.

Poultry workers will be identified in accordance with the type of work they do and then be notified about their entitlement to receive a free flu vaccination. The Board will/has set up arrangements with certain local employers for some of the vaccinations to be carried out but this will not meet the need for all the workers identified. Workers who are unable to be vaccinated through the workplace arrangements will be directed to their local GP. It is this group of patients to whom this LES applies.

#### Aim

If a poultry worker became infected with both human and avian influenza at the same time then there is a very slight risk that the two viruses could mix in their body to create a new and potentially serious flu virus with pandemic potential. Seasonal flu vaccine protects against infection with ordinary human flu thus reducing the risk of a new pandemic virus emerging in this way.

#### Service Specification

- Target population – Poultry Workers who are unable to be vaccinated through workplace arrangements

A poultry worker means:

- (a) an individual who while on poultry premises/unit\* and in the course of his employment (including self-employment) –
  - (i) accesses enclosed poultry rearing or egg production areas,
  - (ii) performs initial sorting of poultry eggs if the sorting area is an integral part of the production unit,
  - (iii) catches or culls poultry within enclosed poultry rearing or egg production areas, or
  - (iv) performs the final clean down of poultry sheds following depopulation of a poultry house;
- (b) an individual who while on poultry premises/unit\* and in the course of his employment (including self-employment) collects or removes poultry manure or litter from within enclosed poultry rearing or egg production areas of poultry premises; or

- (c) an individual who while on poultry premises/unit\* and in the course of his employment (including self-employment) –
- (i) catches or handles live birds,
  - (ii) kills or eviscerates birds, or
  - (iii) cleanses or disinfects areas and equipment contaminated by poultry faeces;

\*Please note that not all poultry premises/units in Northern Ireland are included in this scheme – only those housing 50 or more birds.

- Any registered patient who is a poultry worker (see above definitions) should be offered free vaccination with seasonal ‘flu vaccine
- Patient details should be kept on a register as it is possible, subject to guidance and risk assessment, that this scheme will be implemented next year also
- Flu vaccine supply arrangements are the same as for this year’s (2008/09) flu campaign (ie through Movianto formerly Castlereagh Pharmaceuticals)
- Full and informed consent must be obtained prior to administration of vaccine.
- Patient information leaflets will be available from the Board including those in languages other than English
- The JCVI green book recommendations on flu vaccination should be followed
- The practice should be as flexible as possible in providing the service to encourage maximal uptake
- Information using the data form supplied should be completed and sent to Boards by 3 April 09.
- The Read Codes for the scheme are as follows:
  - 9021. letter invite
  - 65E. influenza vaccine given
  - 68NE. no consent to influenza immunisation
  - 14LJ. medical contraindication to immunization
  - 812F Influenza immunization contraindicated
  - 9N4q. did not attend flu vaccination appointment

### **Duration of LES**

This LES finishes on 31 March 2009. The results of the work across the UK regarding influenza immunisation for poultry workers will be reviewed and it is possible that the scheme will run again next year.

### **Fee Level**

The fee payable to the practice is £9.26 per immunisation administered by the practice to a patient who is a poultry worker in any of the 3 categories described. The practice must also submit a complete data return to the Board on all immunisations administered (see attached).

A patient who falls into more than one category of poultry worker should only be recorded **once** on the data form returned to the Board. The data form will be necessary to enable the Board to make payment to the practice.

The practice does not need to forward any information on poultry workers who are immunised under occupational health arrangements agreed by Boards with industry employers. Practices will be provided with information on workers immunised through occupational health arrangements in order to facilitate individual patient immunisation histories to be updated.

### **Verification**

Any aspect of the service may be subject to verification checks.

### **Payment Process**

Practices that provide this service should make claims by submission of the data form to their Board by 3 April 2009.

### **Contact at the Board**

It is hoped that this vaccination programme will not cause a lot of practical difficulty. In the event that a poultry worker attends the practice and does not know whether he/she should receive seasonal 'flu vaccine the practice can contact \_\_\_\_\_ who is leading in organizing the Poultry Workers Vaccination Programme for this Board area and who will be able to advise accordingly.

**DATA RETURN FORM/CLAIM FORM**  
**POULTRY WORKERS SEASONAL 'FLU VACCINATION SCHEME**  
**2008/2009**

GP Practice: \_\_\_\_\_

GP Practice number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Influenza Vaccines Administered:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**INDIVIDUAL DATA RECORDING FORM**  
**POULTRY WORKERS SEASONAL 'FLU VACCINATION SCHEME**  
**2008/2009**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer/Employing Organisation (if available):

\_\_\_\_\_

Vaccine Used: \_\_\_\_\_

Batch No: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dare of Administration: \_\_\_\_\_

Adverse Reaction(s) Recorded:      Yes                       No

Please describe below:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Poultry Workers Vaccination Programme 2008/09

Your local Health & Social Services Board is coordinating the immunisation programme and will use the details on this form, **in the strictest confidence**, for arranging an appointment with you and letting your GP know that you have been vaccinated so your records can be updated.

Please confirm that you consent to your details being given to the Board by ticking the box below and complete the rest of the form.

I consent

I do not consent

1. Name .....

2. Date of birth.....

3. Address.....

.....

.....

4. Contact telephone number .....

5. GP name (if known).....

6. GP address (if known).....

.....

7. GP telephone number (if known).....

Signed.....Date.....

**Thank you for your help**



**Q & A**  
**Flu immunisation programme for people who work in close contact with poultry**

The Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety (DHSSPS) is offering free flu vaccination this winter to all those who work in close contact with poultry in registered premises. This is being done as a precautionary public health measure and does not mean that workers are at any higher risk of getting flu this winter than usual. Nor does it mean that there is an increased risk of an outbreak of bird flu in the UK as this risk remains low. Nevertheless, experts have recommended that this precautionary measure be taken now for the reasons set out below.

**Why are workers being offered a flu vaccine?**

Working in close contact with poultry means that there is a slight risk that workers could catch the bird flu virus if an outbreak of avian (bird) flu were to occur. If they were also infected with human flu at the same time, the bird and human flu viruses could mix in their body to make a new flu virus. A new flu virus produced in this way could potentially be very infectious and cause serious illness in other people as they would not have any immunity to a new virus. Flu vaccine is being offered to eliminate this slight risk of having both flu and bird flu at the same time. A public health risk assessment found that only workers undertaking certain activities in registered poultry premises were at increased risk. Those not undertaking these activities or working with smaller flocks are not considered to be at increased risk.

**Does flu vaccine protect against bird flu?**

No. Flu vaccine will not protect against bird flu.

**What is the risk of a new flu virus emerging?**

We do not know. We do know that flu viruses readily mix and change to produce new viruses but we do not know to what extent this happens between bird and human flu viruses. DHSSPS already has a policy to offer flu vaccine to all those exposed to bird flu when an outbreak occurs. Having people who work with poultry vaccinated ahead of any outbreak will provide an extra safeguard.

**Is it compulsory for poultry workers to be vaccinated?**

No. It is being offered free of charge and will help protect workers from catching and spreading ordinary human flu.

**When can workers have the flu vaccine?**

Now, unless there are medical reasons they should not such as if they are generally unwell or have a fever (39° and above), in which case they should wait until they are better. Minor coughs and colds are not a reason to delay vaccination.

If workers have already had a flu jab this winter, it is not necessary to have another one until next autumn. Flu vaccines are changed each year to keep them effective against the viruses that circulate naturally. But if they have already had a bout of flu this winter they will still need the vaccine because there are several different types of flu viruses.

### **Can the flu vaccine cause flu?**

No, it cannot cause flu.

### **Will there be any side effects?**

Some people get a slight temperature and aching muscles for a couple of days afterwards, and the arm may feel a bit sore where it has been injected. These slight effects do not indicate any infection with flu. Any other reactions are very rare.

### **Are there any reasons why flu vaccine should not be given?**

People should not be vaccinated if they:

- are allergic to hens' eggs
- have had a severe reaction to flu vaccine in the past
- are currently unwell. They can have the vaccine when they are better
- have already had a flu jab this winter – but should have it again next winter.

### **Can pregnant women have the vaccine?**

There is no evidence of risk from vaccinating pregnant women, or those who are breast-feeding, with flu vaccine but they should mention that they are pregnant when making the appointment.

### **How can people avoid getting bird flu?**

Remember, the flu vaccine does not protect against bird flu. The slight risk of becoming infected can be reduced by following health and safety guidance for working with poultry and by making sure simple hygiene measures whilst at work are followed. Advice is available on the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety website [www.dhsspsni.gov.uk](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk), the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development website [www.dardni.gov.uk](http://www.dardni.gov.uk) or the Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland website [www.hseni.gov.uk](http://www.hseni.gov.uk).

### **Key Facts**

- Avian or Bird flu is primarily a disease of birds caused by bird flu viruses
- There are many different types of bird flu viruses and each differs in its ability to cause disease in birds and people
- People can become infected through close contact with diseased poultry. However, infection in people is rare even in those who are directly exposed to the virus because the virus does not pass easily from birds to people

- The symptoms of bird flu in a person are usually mild flu-like symptoms and mild conjunctivitis (sore eyes with a discharge). Bird flu virus type H5N1 seems to differ from other bird flu types in its ability to cause serious illness with a high death rate in people. To date, there have been no human cases of H5N1 in the UK
- Bird flu can be treated with an antiviral medicine.

## If you work with poultry, read this leaflet now

### YOU CAN GET THE FLU VACCINE IF YOU:

- spend a lot of time in areas where poultry are kept for rearing or egg production purposes
- handle live poultry
- catch poultry in poultry houses
- sort eggs in poultry houses
- clean poultry houses
- collect and remove poultry manure or litter from poultry houses
- slaughter poultry and remove the guts and other parts from dead poultry
- clean and disinfect live bird and evisceration areas in slaughter houses

### Why are you being offered a flu vaccine?

You are being offered flu vaccine because you work with poultry. We want to avoid any possibility of you having ordinary flu at a time when you might come into close contact with a bird infected with avian (bird) flu.

If that happens, your body could make a new flu virus out of the ordinary human seasonal flu virus and the avian virus. This new virus could be very infectious to other people. The risk of this happening is very small, but you are being offered vaccine to further reduce that chance.

This vaccine will **not** protect you against avian flu. It **will** reduce your risk of getting the ordinary human flu that may be around this winter.

### When should I have the flu vaccine?

You should have the vaccine now. If you are unwell and have a high temperature (39°C and above), you should wait until you feel better.

The best time to have the vaccine is in October or November before the main flu season. If you have already been vaccinated this season, you don't need to have it again until next autumn. If you have already had flu this winter you will still need the vaccine because there are several different types of human flu virus.

### Can the flu vaccine cause flu?

**No.** The vaccine doesn't contain live viruses, so it can't cause flu.

### Will there be any side effects?

Some people get a slight temperature and aching muscles for a couple of days afterwards, and your arm may feel a bit sore where you were injected. Other reactions are very rare.

### You should not be vaccinated if you:

- are allergic to hens' eggs
- have had a serious reaction to flu vaccine in the past

- currently have flu symptoms, e.g. a temperature of 39°C and above. You can have the vaccine when you are better
- have already had a flu jab this flu season

There is no evidence of risk from vaccinating pregnant women, or those who are breast-feeding, with flu vaccine. All pregnant women should seek advice from their local doctor or practice nurse before being vaccinated.

**For more information about the flu vaccine talk to the doctor or nurse offering you the vaccine.**

### **How can I avoid getting avian (bird) flu?**

Avian flu is mainly a disease of birds. Avian flu viruses very rarely cause illness in people, but you can reduce the risk by making sure you follow some simple hygiene measures whilst at work such as regularly washing your hands with soap and water. During an outbreak of avian flu you should carefully follow all health and safety advice to reduce the risk of you being exposed to the avian flu virus.

Advice is available on the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety website [www.dhsspsni.gov.uk](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk), the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development website [www.dardni.gov.uk](http://www.dardni.gov.uk) or the Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland website [www.hseni.gov.uk](http://www.hseni.gov.uk).

# Movianto Ireland

## Influenza Vaccine - ORDER FORM

Date of Order:

---

Practice Code:

---

Practice Name:

---

Address:

---



---

Postcode:

---

Phone No:

---

Fax No:

---

Opening Times:

---

Contact Name:

---

Product Name	PACK SIZE		Confirm quantity in NUMBER OF DOSES
Inactivated Influenza Vaccine	10 Pre-filled syringes (i.e. 10 DOSES)		

6A Prince Regent Road, Castlereagh, Belfast BT5 6QR

**Tel: 028 9079 5799 Fax: 028 9079 6303 email:**

**[orders.nireland@movianto.com](mailto:orders.nireland@movianto.com)**

Movianto is a division of AAH Pharmaceuticals Ltd. Registered in England No: 123458 Reg Office: Sapphire Court, Walsgrave Triangle, Coventry CV2 2TX