

WELSH HEALTH CIRCULAR



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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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For Action by:

Immunisation Leads, Health Boards
Chief Executives, Health Boards/Trusts
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British Medical Association
GPC(Wales)
General Practitioners
Royal College of GPs
Royal College of Nursing
Royal College of Midwives
Royal Pharmaceutical Society
Directors of Primary, Community and
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Directors of Maternity Services, Health
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Directors of Workforce and Organisation

Sender:

Chief Medical Officer for Wales

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Dear Colleague,

Important update on supply of UK-licensed BCG vaccine manufactured by AJ Vaccines (formerly the Statens Serum Institut (SSI)) for the national BCG programme

The purpose of this letter is to advise you that AJ Vaccines has resumed supply of the sole UK-licensed BCG vaccine to the national programme.

BCG Vaccine Supply

BCG vaccine is centrally supplied to the NHS in line with national policy to selectively offer vaccination to those at increased risk of exposure to tuberculosis (TB) infection.

Since 2015, supply of the only UK-licensed BCG vaccine into the UK from the contracted supplier, SSI, was interrupted due to manufacturing issues. In turn, this led to ordering restrictions and advice being issued on priority groups for BCG vaccine.

In July 2016, the last of the SSI BCG vaccine from the central stockholding was issued, and an alternative BCG vaccine from InterVax Ltd, which is not licensed in the UK, was centrally procured by Public Health England on behalf of the UK to enable the continuation of the programme.

It is anticipated that ordering for the UK-licensed AJ Vaccines product will be opened during July/August 2018, depending on the stock situation. In the meantime, remaining stocks of unlicensed BCG vaccine will continue to be issued.

All organisations holding centrally supplied BCG vaccine are advised to use their current stocks of InterVax BCG vaccine before ordering the licensed vaccine, to minimise vaccine wastage. This is particularly important as supplies for this vaccine remain globally constrained.

Licensed BCG vaccine (AJ Vaccines)

BCG vaccine supplied by AJ Vaccines is presented as a powder for reconstitution in a glass vial with synthetic stopper.

A Public Health England template PGD for the administration of BCG vaccine manufactured by AJ Vaccines is being developed. In the event that this licensed vaccine is available before a PGD is published, provider organisations may continue to use PSDs in the interim.

Ensuring all eligible groups can access BCG vaccine

It is anticipated that there will be sufficient licensed BCG vaccine stock for all eligible groups. To help with managing this, the plan is for ordering to be opened to all ImmForm accounts at an initial 2 packs per order per week, but this will be kept under review. To note, that at times the shelf life of this product may be relatively short, therefore it is advised not to create locally held stockpiles.

Health boards are asked to ensure that eligible children aged 1 to 5 years who missed out on the vaccine during the period of constrained supply are caught up as soon as is practicable.

Information materials for health professionals

Further information for healthcare workers on the use of licenced vaccine will be available on the Public Health Wales web site shortly at:

<http://www.immunisation.wales.nhs.uk/bcg-vaccination-programme>

The TB chapter of Immunisation against infectious disease (the “Green Book”) is being revised and will be published in due course.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tuberculosis-the-green-book-chapter-32>

I am grateful for your support in the implementation of this programme.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Frank Atherton

Chief Medical Officer / Medical Director NHS Wales