

From the Chief Medical Officer
Dr Michael McBride



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Mánnystrie O Poustie

www.health-ni.gov.uk

HSS(MD)32/2019

FOR ACTION

Chief Executives, Public Health Agency/Health and Social Care
Board/HSC Trusts/NIAS
GP Medical Advisers, Health and Social Care Board
All General Practitioners
GP Locums (*for onward distribution to practice staff*)

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Our Ref: HSS(MD)32/2019

Date: 21 November 2019

Dear Colleague

UPDATE ON PERTUSSIS (WHOOPING COUGH) VACCINATION OF PREGNANT WOMEN

ACTION REQUIRED

Chief Executives must ensure that this information is drawn to the attention of all staff involved in the care of pregnant women to enable them to respond accordingly and encourage uptake of the vaccination

The HSCB must ensure that this information is cascaded to all General Practitioners immediately.

1. The purpose of this letter is to advise you that the temporary programme of pertussis vaccination of pregnant women, first introduced in September 2012, has now been made permanent, following updated advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).
2. The evidence considered by JCVI included a new Public Health England study which was published in The Lancet Infectious Diseases. This study showed high levels of protection against pertussis in babies born to vaccinated mothers. Babies born to women vaccinated at least a week before delivery had a 91% reduction in the risk of pertussis disease in their first weeks of life when compared with babies whose mothers had not been vaccinated.
3. The Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) also found no safety concerns relating to pertussis vaccination in pregnancy based

on a large study of nearly 18,000 vaccinated women with similar rates of normal, healthy births in vaccinated and in unvaccinated women.

4. JCVI has concluded that the maternal programme had been highly successful and there has been a substantial impact on disease. As a result, JCVI have advised that the maternal programme should now continue as a routine programme.

Vaccination arrangements in Northern Ireland

5. In Northern Ireland the uptake of the pertussis vaccine in pregnant women is around 69%. All pregnant women should continue to be given the opportunity to be vaccinated, by using every contact to remind them of the importance of vaccination. All babies should continue to receive their primary vaccinations, scheduled at 2, 3 and 4 months, in a timely manner.
6. In Northern Ireland the Health and Social Care Board will put in place appropriate arrangements to ensure all GPs routinely offer and encourage all pregnant women to receive the vaccine within their practice.
7. As with the previous temporary arrangements, the Department will provide funding to cover the cost of the additional vaccine required; payments to GPs for the immunisation; and a data collection fee.

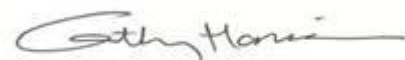
Yours sincerely



Dr Michael McBride
Chief Medical Officer



Professor Charlotte McArdle
Chief Nursing Officer



Mrs Cathy Harrison
Acting Chief Pharmaceutical
Officer

This letter is available on the Department of Health website at

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/professional-medical-and-environmental-health-advice/hssmd-letters-and-urgent-communications>

CIRCULATION LIST

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Director of Nursing, Public Health Agency,
Assistant Director of Pharmacy and Medicines Management, Health and Social Care Board (*for onward distribution to Community Pharmacies*)
Directors of Pharmacy HSC Trusts,
Director of Social Care and Children, HSCB
Family Practitioner Service Leads, Health and Social Care Board (*for cascade to GP Out of Hours services*)
Medical Directors, HSC Trusts (*for onward distribution to all Consultants, Occupational Health Physicians and School Medical Leads*)
Nursing Directors, HSC Trusts (*for onward distribution to all Community Nurses, and Midwives*)
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