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Afluria should not be used routinely in children younger than 9 years

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CSL Biotherapies' trivalent influenza vaccine (brand name Afluria, marketed by Merck in the United States) is not recommended for routine use in children ages 6 months through 8 years of age for the 2010-'11 influenza season in the United States (www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5931a4.htm?s_cid=mm5931a4_e). Afluria can be used for children 9 years of age and older.

During the Southern Hemisphere's 2010 influenza season, Afluria was associated with an increased frequency of fever in children ages 6 months to 9 years and simple febrile seizures in children 6 months to 5 years. Extensive investigations have not identified an explanation for these findings. These adverse events were seen only with Afluria; no evidence exists to indicate that other influenza vaccine products are associated with a similar increase in risk of fever or febrile seizure.

All other age-appropriate, licensed influenza vaccine formulations should be used to protect children ages 6 months through 8 years (see Table 2 in *Recommendations for Prevention and Control of Influenza in Children, 2010-2011*, at <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/abstract/peds.2010-2011v1>).

CSL will distribute only its 0.5mL formulation of Afluria in the United States during the upcoming influenza season. The Food and Drug Administration recently revised the warning and precautions section of the Afluria package insert to inform health care providers of the increased incidence of fever and febrile seizures in young children, predominantly among those younger than 5 years of age (www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm220718.htm).

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Academy recommend that Afluria not be used this year for children younger than 5 years of age and be used in children 5 through 8 years of age at high-risk for influenza complications *only* if no other age-appropriate formulation of seasonal trivalent influenza vaccine is available.