

TO: EZIZ Users
FROM: CDPH
SUBJECT: Temporary Exemption from the Mercury-Free Act - Use of influenza vaccine in children younger than 3 years of age
DATE: 10/9/15

Dear EZIZ Users:

Since 2006, California law [Health and Safety Code Section 124172 subdivision (a)] has stated that vaccines containing specific levels of mercury cannot be administered to pregnant women and young children, except under certain circumstances. Because of the dangers posed by the seasonal influenza epidemic, and because there are currently insufficient supplies of thimerosal-free influenza vaccine that have levels of mercury below the state legal limits, the Secretary of the California Health and Human Services Agency has granted a temporary exemption to this restriction for 2015-16 seasonal influenza vaccine administered to children younger than 3 years old for the period of October 9, 2015 – December 31, 2015, to be used as needed based on vaccine availability.

This temporary exemption will help protect young children at high-risk for severe influenza complications and is similar to exemptions issued in 2006, 2009 and 2013. In accordance with the intent of the law, during this exemption period physicians should prioritize any remaining supplies of thimerosal-free vaccine to young children when feasible. As with other routine vaccines, providers should continue to provide patients and parents or guardians with the specific Vaccine Information Statement (VIS) that lists risks and benefits before immunization.

Information about the exemption is described at <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/immunize/Pages/CaliforniaThimerosalLaw.aspx>. Please contact the California Department of Public Health's Immunization Branch at (510) 620-3737 if you have additional questions after visiting the website.

Thank you for your efforts to protect Californians against influenza!

California Department of Public Health Influenza Branch