

September 2013

Dear Headteacher,

Porcine Gelatine and Vaccines

During recent meetings with schools regarding the nasal flu pilot campaign a number of Headteachers have asked questions about the nasal flu vaccine (Fluenz®) and its porcine gelatine content. This follows on from recent media reports about vaccines and gelatine. Please see the information below from Public Health England.

Public Health England Statement

Porcine gelatine has been certified as acceptable by many multi-faith groups.

Gelatine is used to stabilise live viral vaccines and is contained in many pharmaceutical products, not just Fluenz.

Public Health England (PHE) has previously published advice on its website from representatives of the Jewish community and global Muslim communities regarding porcine or other animal-derived ingredients in medicinal products such as vaccines.

Rabbi Abraham Adler from the Kashrus and Medicines Information Service, said:

It should be noted that according to Jewish laws, there is no problem with porcine or other animal derived ingredients in non-oral products. This includes vaccines, including those administered via the nose, injections, suppositories, creams and ointments.

In 2001, the World Health Organization consulted with over 100 Muslim scholars and confirmed that the gelatine used is considered halal and there is no religious reason not to receive vaccination. A [summary report](#) on the findings of more than one hundred Islamic legal scholars who met in 1995 to clarify Islamic purity laws states the following:

Transformation which means the conversion of a substance into another substance, different in characteristics, changes substances that are judicially impure . . . into pure substances, and changes substances that are prohibited into lawful and permissible substances.

Dr Mary Ramsay, head of immunisation at PHE, said:

We strongly recommend that anyone whose child is offered immunisation accepts this opportunity to give their child the best protection possible against the flu virus.

This large programme has potential to protect children against the severe complications of flu and to reduce spread to more vulnerable people such as young infants, pregnant women, and those with underlying medical conditions.

We hope that this provides the information that you need to reassure you about the use of Fluenz® in faith groups. If you require any further information please contact Denise Johnson (Project Manager) on: 0191 5181564, Sue Daws (Lead Nurse) on: who will be able to assist you.

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