

News Release

H1N1 FLU VIRUS: CANADA WORKS WITH AUSTRALIA TO ENSURE EARLY DELIVERY OF VACCINE FOR PREGNANT WOMEN

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

(OTTAWA) – Health Minister Leona Aglukkaq and Canada’s Chief Public Health Officer, Dr. David Butler-Jones, announced today that the Government of Canada had secured additional unadjuvanted H1N1 flu vaccine from Australia.

“The Government wants pregnant women across the country to have access to unadjuvanted vaccine as soon as possible,” said Minister Aglukkaq. “While our order from GSK remains on schedule, the unadjuvanted vaccine we have secured from Australia will be available ahead of the GSK order.”

The Minister thanked both manufacturer CSL Australia and the Australian Government for their cooperation and underscored that pregnant women remain a priority group for vaccination.

“The Government of Canada has purchased 200,000 doses of unadjuvanted H1N1 vaccine from manufacturer CSL Australia,” stated Dr. Butler-Jones. “Barring any distribution delays, the vaccine will be available to the provinces and territories as early as the first week of November.”

This vaccine has been approved for use in Australia and the United States. Canada has authorized access to Australia’s unadjuvanted vaccine to ensure that pregnant women in Canada would have access to an unadjuvanted vaccine on a timely basis. The GSK vaccine is still on target for delivery in early November, however given that the increase in cases of H1N1 flu across the country, this purchase from Australia will allow for earlier access to the unadjuvanted vaccine.

Women more than 20 weeks pregnant, and women in earlier stages of pregnancy with risk factors for severe disease, should consider getting the adjuvanted vaccine until the unadjuvanted vaccine is available.



An adjuvant is a substance that is added to a vaccine to improve immune response. In the case of the H1N1 flu vaccine, the adjuvant includes naturally occurring oil, water and vitamin E. All evidence suggests that adjuvanted vaccines are just as safe as unadjuvanted vaccines; however there adjuvanted vaccines have not been widely tested in pregnant women. The World Health Organization has recommended that pregnant women receive unadjuvanted vaccine where possible, but adjuvanted vaccine could be used if necessary.

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