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## The request for advice

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**Date of request: March 29,2010; reference: PG/CI-2.955.461**

I received five advisory reports in 2009 on vaccination against pandemic influenza A (H1N1). On 8 May 2009 the Health Council of the Netherlands presented its initial advisory letter: 'Vaccination against Mexican flu'. The Health Council and the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) jointly presented further advisory reports on this subject in 2009, on 17 August, 17 September, 9 and 25 November. These advisory reports formed the basis for a large-scale vaccination campaign in the Netherlands in the autumn of 2009 against pandemic influenza A (H1N1).

Besides the risk groups that qualify every year for vaccination against seasonal influenza, you designated two new groups in 2009 that would qualify for the vaccination on medical grounds. The groups were pregnant women as of the 2nd trimester and children from 6 months up to and including 4 years. You also recommended vaccinating members of households which included children younger than 6 months old in view of the envisaged additional indirect protection it would provide the young children concerned. I adopted your recommendations and the people in the aforementioned risk groups were invited last year to have the pandemic vaccination.

The pandemic influenza virus A (H1N1) is still circulating. Consequently, on the advice of the WHO, this strain has been included in the influenza vaccines manufacturers are producing this year for the 2010-2011 influenza season. This brings me to the question of whether the target groups that were added to the list of those qualifying for vaccination against pandemic Influenza A (H1N1) in 2009

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should also be offered the influenza vaccination this year. I request you to produce an advisory report on this. I have the following specific questions:

- 1 Do you see any reason to again indicate for vaccination against the same virus the groups that were specifically indicated last year for vaccination against pandemic influenza A (H1N1), namely pregnant women as of the 2nd trimester, children aged from 6 months up to and including 4 years and members of households that include children younger than 6 months old?

If yes,

- a Is there an indication for vaccination again this year in the case of people in the aforementioned groups who were vaccinated (once or twice) last year against pandemic influenza A (H1N1)?
  - b The Netherlands still has a stock of adjuvanted vaccine against pandemic influenza A (H1N1). These vaccines will still be suitable for use in the coming influenza season. The influenza vaccines that manufacturers are producing for the 2010-2011 influenza season will also provide protection against pandemic influenza A (H1N1). Are the two vaccines sufficiently safe and effective to use for vaccinating the various target groups or is one of these vaccines preferable?
  - c Will one efficacious dose of the vaccine be sufficient for these target groups?
  - d What is the optimum period within which vaccination should be offered to provide sufficient protection and would you be able to state the latest possible date?
- 2 Following on from the above, I also request you to answer questions 1c and 1d for the medical groups that are vaccinated every year within the scope of the National Influenza Prevention Programme.

It will be necessary to make preparations for organising the vaccination of extra groups, if I decide to do so on your advice. Any such decision will have to be communicated to those concerned in good time and it may be necessary to start a new time-consuming tendering procedure. I therefore request you to send me your recommendations by no later than 2 April 2010.

The Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport,  
(signed)  
dr. A. Klink