



Should this influenza vaccine reaction be reported as an adverse event?



Injection site reactions involving pain, redness and swelling at or near the injection site occur in 10 to 64 % of influenza vaccine recipients.<sup>1</sup> They are inflammatory responses to the foreign material in the vaccine and the tissue irritation caused by the injection process.<sup>2</sup> These reactions occur within 48 hours of vaccination,<sup>2</sup> are usually mild and resolve spontaneously in two to three days.<sup>1</sup>

Symptoms can be managed with cold compresses, acetaminophen or ibuprofen if required for discomfort and reassurance that this is a common occurrence with no serious consequences.<sup>2,3</sup> Pressure should not be applied on the injection site.<sup>2</sup>

An injection site reaction is not a contraindication to future influenza vaccinations.<sup>2</sup> Note, it is not

recommended to take acetaminophen or ibuprofen prophylactically as there is no evidence that this is of benefit<sup>3</sup> and some evidence it might interfere the therapeutic immune response to the vaccine.<sup>4</sup>

Patients should be referred to their doctors or nurse practitioners and reactions reported as adverse events following immunization (AEFI) in the following situations:

- Redness, or swelling, or pain extends past the nearest joint; AND/OR
- Redness, or swelling, or pain persists for 10 days or more<sup>2</sup>

**Should the reaction pictured above be reported?**

**Only if the symptoms last longer than 10 days. It would be important to follow-up with the child's caregiver to find out if the symptoms have resolved.**

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**References:**

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2. BC Centre for Disease Control. Summary of Reporting Criteria. In: Communicable Disease Control Manual Chapter 2: Immunization, Part 5 - Adverse Events Following Immunization. [Accessed 28 Nov 2017.] Available at [http://www.bccdc.ca/resource-gallery/Documents/Guidelines%20and%20Forms/Guidelines%20and%20Manuals/Epid/CD%20Manual/Chapter%202-%20Imms/Part\\_5\\_AEFI.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/resource-gallery/Documents/Guidelines%20and%20Forms/Guidelines%20and%20Manuals/Epid/CD%20Manual/Chapter%202-%20Imms/Part_5_AEFI.pdf). Accessed Nov. 28, 2017.
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