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Dear Doctors,

**Updated Recommendations on Use of Pneumococcal Vaccine under  
Childhood Immunisation Programme**

We write to inform you that the Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases (SCVPD) under the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) has made updated recommendations on the use of 13-valent pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV13) under the Hong Kong Childhood Immunisation Programme (HKCIP).

Currently, under the HKCIP, eligible children receive a primary series of three doses of PCV13 at 2, 4 and 6 months, followed by a booster dose at 12 months (3p+1 schedule), which is the same as the schedule recommended for infants and toddlers by the drug company of the PCV13 “PREVENAR 13 VACCINE” registered in Hong Kong. In its position paper in 2012<sup>1</sup>, the World Health Organization (WHO) recommended a 3-dose PCV schedule for infants, either 3p+0 (3 primary doses) or 2p+1 (2 primary doses plus a booster), as alternatives to the manufacturers’ labelled 3p+1 schedule. In October 2017, the WHO Strategic Advisory Group of Experts Working Group on PCVs reviewed the evidence to inform PCV vaccination policy. It was concluded that both 3p+0 and 2p+1 schedules were effective in reducing vaccine-type carriage and diseases.<sup>2</sup> A single dose catch-up vaccination can be offered for those initiating PCV at 24 months and older. These recommendations have been reiterated in the WHO’s latest position paper published in February 2019<sup>3</sup>.

After reviewing local epidemiology of IPD, overseas studies, as well as recommendations from the WHO and overseas health authorities, the SCVPD and its Working Group on Pneumococcal Vaccination (WGPV) continues to



<sup>1</sup> Available from: [https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/241904/WER8714\\_129-144.PDF](https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/241904/WER8714_129-144.PDF)

<sup>2</sup> Available from: [https://www.who.int/immunization/sage/meetings/2017/october/presentations\\_background\\_docs/en](https://www.who.int/immunization/sage/meetings/2017/october/presentations_background_docs/en)

<sup>3</sup> Available from: <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/310968/WER9408.pdf?ua=1>

recommend the use of PCV13 in the HKCIP. The SCVPD and WGPV recommended a change of PCV13 schedule from 3p+1 to 2p+1 which is different from the prescribing information listed on the current package insert of “PREVENAR 13 VACCINE”. Under the updated 2p+1 schedule, children should receive 2 primary doses of PCV13 at 2 and 4 months, followed by a booster dose of PCV13 **at 12 months**. This change will simplify the vaccination schedules of the HKCIP with one less vaccine given at 6 months. Based on the available evidence and overseas experience, the SCVPD and WGPV regarded that the 2p+1 schedule is non-inferior to the current 3p+1 schedule and should provide comparable protection against IPD to children in Hong Kong.

In view of the relatively low PCV13 uptake among non-local preschool children revealed by the CHP’s immunisation coverage survey, the SCVPD and WGPV also updated its previous recommendation on catch-up vaccination. Under the updated recommendation, **a single dose of PCV13 catch-up vaccination should be provided to children who have not received any booster dose of PCV13 between the age of one year to <6 years**. The details of the updated schedule are shown in **Annex**.

The Maternal and Child Health Centres (MCHCs) of DH will implement the updated 2p+1 schedule for children born on or after 1 January 2019. It means that these children will no longer receive PCV13 at their 6-month visit in MCHCs from July 2019 onwards. Catch-up vaccination will also be provided as appropriate.

Please refer the following webpage for the updated recommendations on PCV13 and the latest schedule of the HKCIP recommended by the SCVPD (<https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/static/24008.html>). Please draw the attention of the healthcare professionals and supporting staff in your institution/ working with you to the above. May I take this opportunity to thank you for your continuous support in combating infectious diseases in Hong Kong.

Yours faithfully,



(Dr. CHUANG Shuk-kwan)  
for Controller, Centre for Health Protection  
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**Annex**

**Updated vaccination schedule of PCV13 under the HKCIP**

<b>Standard regimen*</b>	
A standard 2-dose primary series at 2 and 4 months of age with a booster dose at 12 months (2p+1)	
<b>Catch up schedule for missed or delayed doses</b>	
Age at presentation	Schedule
6 months or below*	A 2-dose primary series at any time with 4-8 weeks' interval between doses; then a booster dose at 12 months (i.e. 2p+1)
7 months to less than 1 year	A 2-dose primary series with an interval of 4-8 weeks but not later than the age of 1 year; then a booster dose at 12 months or 2 months after the last dose whichever is later (i.e. 2p+1)  If the second dose of the primary series is not administered by the age of 1 year, only give a booster dose at 12 months or 2 months after the last dose whichever is later (i.e. 1p+1)
1 year to less than 6 years^	One single dose (irrespective of the number of doses received before 1 year of age)

\*The primary series is changed from 3 doses to 2 doses.

^The upper age limit is changed from less than 2 years to less than 6 years.