

Staff Talking Points Re: Porcine Gelatin in FluMist
September 12, 2014

What is porcine gelatin?

- It is a protein formed from pork skin or tissue and is used to stabilize vaccines so that they remain effective.

How much is in the vaccine?

- Two milligrams, which is an amount equivalent to one thousandth of a gram.

Is there a flu vaccine that doesn't include porcine gelatin?

- Yes, the flu shot does not contain porcine. We can give this to your child instead if you wish. *(KCHD Staff: If they want to have us administer a flu shot instead, ask for the parent's cell phone and their child's name, school and grade to coordinate administering the shot on their child's clinic date. Please then email this information to SLVC@knoxcounty.org. If they are in a Knox County Elementary School, they cannot get a flu shot at school; parents will need to bring their child to any KCHD location to get a free flu shot. If it's the day of this child's vaccination clinic and they are signed up for FluMist, call John, 755-1579, or Jody's, 256-5565, cell phones ASAP.)*

Why are you just now telling us?

- We just became aware through our own research, prompted by a question from a local family.

Why didn't you know beforehand?

- We do not manufacture the vaccine.
- We rely on the CDC, FDA and manufacturers to provide us with pertinent information about the vaccines, including any warnings or notices.
- These warnings and notices do not require including all the ingredients if they do not pose a medical risk.
- In this case, there was no notice or warning regarding porcine products.

What about all the years you gave my child FluMist?

- We apologize and wish this information had been provided to us.
- Moving forward, we will provide advance notice of this ingredient so that parents and guardians can make informed decisions.

It's against my faith to use porcine products.

- It's our understanding that porcine gelatin has been certified as "acceptable" by many multi-faith groups. We have found a few resources that may be helpful if you would like to review them.

Information/Resources:

- Immunization Action Coalition: www.immunize.org
- Immunization Action Coalition, Religious & Ethical Resources: <http://www.vaccinesafety.edu/Porcine-vaccineapproval.htm>
- U.S. Food and Drug Administration: <http://www.fda.gov/BiologicsBloodVaccines/Vaccines/>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov/vaccines
- The Vegan Society: <http://www.vegansociety.com/resources/nutrition-health/medicines>