

## **Nasally Administered Influenza Vaccine is Safe and Effective for Young Children**

March 6, 2007--The intranasally administered influenza vaccine is safe and effective in children 12 to 59 months old according to a report in the February 15<sup>th</sup> issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

Due to the high acceptability of administration, Robert B. Belshe, M.D. and colleagues performed a study in children to test the safety and efficacy of intranasally administered live attenuated influenza vaccine versus the recommended injected inactivated influenza vaccine.

In a double blind trial children between the ages of 6 and 59 months, with no history of severe asthma or wheezing within 42 days of the start of the study, were randomly assigned either intranasal trivalent live attenuated influenza vaccine or injected trivalent inactivated vaccine. Children received one or two doses of vaccine depending on their previous flu vaccination status. Cases of influenza were confirmed with cultures. In all, 7852 children completed the study.

There were 54.9% fewer cases of confirmed influenza in the group that received the intranasal vaccine. In children younger than 12 months of age, there was a 1.7% increase in wheezing and a 3.5% increase in the rate of hospitalization (for any reason) after intranasal vaccination.

The authors conclude that the intranasal vaccine is effective and safe for children 12 to 59 months of age who do not have a history of wheezing or severe asthma. Additional studies are needed to determine the usage in babies less than one year of age and in young children with a history of respiratory problems to determine the safest protocol.