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**HSS(MD)50/2003**

18<sup>th</sup> December 2003

To:

All General Practitioners (for onward dissemination to Practice Nurses and Practice Managers)  
All Community Pharmacists  
Consultants in Communicable Disease Control, Health & Social Services Boards  
Directors of Pharmacy, Health & Social Services Boards  
Directors of Pharmacy, Health & Social Services Trusts (for onward dissemination to Trust Pharmacists)

Dear Colleague

**ADSORBED DIPHTHERIA VACCINE FOR ADULTS**  
**Marketing authorisation number: PL 01511/0045**

The Circular HSS(MD)34/2003 (dated 6<sup>th</sup> August 2003) advised users that adsorbed diphtheria vaccine for adults (d) was being replaced by the combined Tetanus/low dose diphtheria vaccine for adults and adolescents (Td) for all routine uses.

Users are now asked to note that the marketing authorisation for adsorbed diphtheria vaccine for adults will lapse on 18 January 2004 and after that date the product will no longer be licensed.

We wish to remind users that the advice set out in Circular HSS(MD)34/2003 this year still stands as follows:

The Department recommends that the combined tetanus-low dose diphtheria (Td) vaccine is now used to protect adults and children aged 10 years or over against diphtheria. The Joint Committee of Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), which provides expert advice on immunisation issues, has supported this change which is also in keeping with World Health Organisation recommendations.

To protect against diphtheria, Td should now be used:

- For primary immunisation of adults and adolescents aged ten years or over previously unimmunised against diphtheria
- Where reinforcing immunisation with diphtheria is needed, or for the purposes of travel

Please note that for diphtheria (as for tetanus) a total of 5 doses of vaccine are considered to give lifelong immunity.

The Department recommends that Td vaccine is now used in place of adsorbed diphtheria vaccine and that existing stocks are disposed of locally.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lorraine Doherty". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L'.

**DR LORRAINE DOHERTY**  
**SENIOR MEDICAL OFFICER**

**cc:** Dr Jill Mairs, Regional Procurement Pharmacist  
Dr Vanessa Chambers, DHSSPS  
Dr Norman Morrow, DHSSPS  
Mr Gerry Dorrian, DHSSPS