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Guest Editors: Christopher Handley, Pharm.D. Candidate; Sheena K. Harris, Pharm.D. Candidate

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August is National Immunization Awareness Month



Meningitis on Campus

College students, especially those that are living in dormitories, are at a higher risk for meningococcal meningitis. Freshman living in dorms are six times more likely to get the disease. Occurrence among adolescents has increased by nearly 60% since the early 1990s.¹ It is the lifestyles among college students that are commonly linked to the disease:



crowded living conditions, smoking, going to bars, and irregular sleeping habits. The disease is usually spread through air droplets and direct contact with someone that is infected. Meningitis often presents with fever, headache, stiff neck, confusion, nausea, vomiting and exhaustion; which are common symptoms of the flu. Later, symptoms of a rash may appear. If any of these symptoms present suddenly and are severe, please call a physician immediately. Immunization can prevent up to 80% of meningococcal meningitis cases that are seen in adults and adolescents.² The vaccine is safe and effective and provides immunity for up to five years.

1. National Meningitis Association. [Homepage on the Internet] Marietta, GA. 2008; c2008 [cited 2008 July 15]. Available from <http://www.nmaus.org/meningitis/>

2. WebMD. Meningitis Symptoms & Warning Signs. The WebMD Staff. Updated May 02, 2007. Accessed 2008 July 14. Available from: <http://www.webmd.com/a-to-z-guides/meningitis-symptoms-warning-signs>

Travelers Guide to Vaccinations

There are several important factors you need to look into before traveling out of the country. First, set an appointment with a doctor or travel medicine provider 4 to 6 weeks prior to your trip. Most vaccines take time to become effective and some are given as a series of vaccinations. There are two categories of vaccines:



those recommended and those required by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for travel. Recommended vaccines are those that will protect travelers from illnesses in other parts of the world, but are not required for travel. These are dependent on where you are traveling, the season of the year, age, health status, and previous immunizations.¹ Yellow fever is the only vaccination that is required by the International Health Regulations. This vaccination is for travel to certain countries in the sub-Saharan Africa and tropical South America areas. Also, meningococcal vaccination is required by the government of Saudi Arabia for annual travel during the Hajj.² Other vaccinations that are required before travel can be accessed at www.cdc.gov/travel/contentyellowbook.

1. CDC.gov[homepage on the Internet] Atlanta: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; [updated 2007 July 26, cited 2008 July 17]. Available from: <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/contentVaccinations.aspx>

2. Grabenstein JD. *ImmunoFacts: Vaccines and Immunologic Drugs*. St. Louis, MO: Wolters Kluwer Health; 2007. 131-136

From the Medical Literature

Vaccines not linked to Autism



Many reports of autism were linked to the hypothesis that autism is caused by infant exposure to thimerosal. Since the 1930's, thimerosal has been used as a preservative in vaccines to prevent microbial contamination. A California Department of Developmental Services (DDS) investigation found that the exclusion of thimerosal from vaccines did not decrease the number of autism reports. The

prevalence of autism in children ages 3 to 12 increased throughout the study.¹ Outcomes of this study are supported from previous trials evaluating similar populations in larger numbers.² Researchers believe thimerosal is not the primary cause of autism in children.

1. Schechter R, Grether JK. Continuing increases in autism reported to California's developmental services system. *Arch Gen Psychiatry* 2008;65(1):19-24

2. Thompson W, Price C, Goodson B, et al. Early thimerosal exposure and neuropsychological outcomes at 7 to 10 years. *N Engl J Med* 2007;357:1281-1292.

What if Im Pregnant?



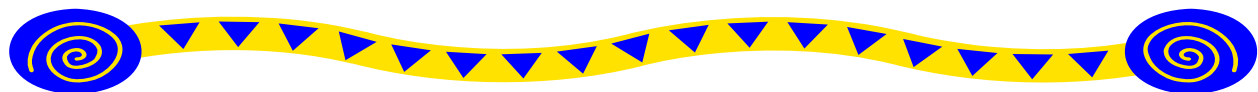
According to the CDC, no evidence exists concerning the risk of vaccinating a pregnant woman.¹ However, live vaccines pose a theoretical risk of transmission to the fetus; therefore vaccines such as, live influenza, measles, mumps, rubella, varicella, and zoster are contraindicated in pregnancy. Counseling about possible effects in the fetus, should occur if a woman becomes pregnant within 4 weeks after vaccination. Although this risk is proposed, vaccination with other vaccines should be continued during pregnancy.¹

1. CDC.gov[homepage on the Internet] Atlanta: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; [updated 2008 May 31, cited 2008 July 16]. Available from: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/preg-guide.htm>

10 Things Every Parent Should Know About Immunizations



- 1. Vaccines help prevent childhood diseases:** Diseases such as diphtheria, human papillomavirus, measles, mumps, and etc, are easily preventable through a series of vaccinations.¹
- 2. Minor side effects may occur:** Remember that vaccines, just like medicine, may display minor side effects such as: rash, soreness from injection site, slight fever, or discomfort.¹
- 3. Waiting may cause more harm than benefit:** Adults are not as susceptible to diseases, as are children. Those, ≤ 5 years of age immune systems' do not have all of the proper defenses to fight infections that vaccinations can prevent. This predisposes unvaccinated children to communicable diseases.¹
- 4. Shot records can prevent unnecessary revaccinations:** Tracking immunizations will aid you and your healthcare provider to properly vaccinate your children with on time and eliminate possible revaccination.¹
- 5. Don't worry, your child maybe able to receive free vaccinations:** Vaccines for Children provides free vaccines to children without health insurance. Federally Qualified Health Clinics or Rural Health Centers provide free vaccinations to children enrolled in Medicaid, American Indians and Alaskan Natives, and children's health insurance that do not cover vaccines.¹
- 6. Vaccine immunity is as strong as immunity from an infection:** Vaccines provide the same coverage and prevention as an infection would display in terms of antibody protection. Vaccines help your child's immune system work more effectively in fighting diseases and infections.²
- 7. Don't neglect booster shots:** Vaccines such as measles, mumps, tetanus and pertussis do not provide lifelong immunity. Booster shots are often needed to maintain immunity.²
- 8. Vaccines are not always wise:** Vaccines should be avoided in children with allergies to specific vaccine components, such as eggs. Also, children with hypersensitivities or life threatening reactions to particular vaccines should not receive further doses.²
- 9. Illness may alter vaccination schedule:** Children experiencing moderate to severe illness on vaccination day should reschedule. However, illnesses such as the common cold or ear infection, will not affect the vaccination process and there is no need to postpone their vaccination.²
- 10. Comforting your child can ease the vaccination process:** Remaining calm and relaxed or holding your child's hand will help them during the shot. Bring their favorite blanket, stuffed animal or toy to provide distraction and additional comfort.²



1. CDC.gov[homepage on the Internet] Atlanta: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; [updated 2007 May 24, cited 2008 July 16]. Available from: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vac-gen/10-shouldknow.htm>

2. Mayo Clinic.com [Home page]. Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research. Updated July 1, 2008. <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/vaccines/CC00014> "Vaccination" Accessed 07/15/08.

The Flu and You



Influenza, commonly referred to as the flu, is a contagious respiratory illness. According to the CDC, each year the US averages about 36,000 deaths from the flu and 200,000 hospitalizations from flu complications. The flu may appear like a common cold in its initial stages; with a runny nose, sneezing, and sore throat. However, the common cold usually develops slowly over a week; whereas, the flu develops suddenly. Typical symptoms of the flu include: fever >101°F, extreme tiredness, dry cough, runny or stuffy nose, muscle aches, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.¹ Prevention of the flu is best handled by receiving a flu vaccination yearly. October or November is the best time to get vaccinated. However, you can still receive vaccination as late as May of the following year. People who are allergic to chicken eggs, or have had a severe reaction to a flu vaccination in the past, should consult a physician before receiving a flu shot.² Boosting your immune system with a healthy diet can aid in this prevention process. Remember, washing your hands, getting adequate amounts of sleep, and exercising regularly will also help prevent your chances of catching the flu.¹

1. Mayo Clinic.com [Home page]. Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research. Updated July 1, 2008.

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/influenza/DS00081> "Influenza" Accessed 07/15/08.

2. CDC.gov[homepage on the Internet] Atlanta: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; [updated 2007 November 16, cited 2008 July 16]. Available from: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/keyfacts.htm>

Is Gardasil® Safe?

Recent reports of Gardasil® (humanpapillomavirus vaccine) are suggesting concerns related to safety and side effects of the vaccine. Between June 8, 2006 and April 30, 2008, there have been 7,802 reported adverse effects, to the CDC and Federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA), from patients who received the Gardasil® vaccine.¹ Although, none of these adverse events are proven to be caused by Gardasil®, many are asking if the vaccine is safe. Included in the reports of adverse effects are 15 deaths and 31 reports of Guillain-Barré syndrome, which is a potentially paralyzing, life threatening condition. Non-serious events, such as injection site pain and fainting, made up 93% of the reports. The adverse events are being monitored continually by the vaccine manufacturer. They stress that adverse event reports do not amount to proof of cause and effect.²

1. WebMD. Gardasil Safety: Questions and Answers. The WebMD Staff. Updated July 8, 2008. Accessed on July 17, 2008. Available from: <http://www.webmd.com/cancer/cervical-cancer/news/20080708/gardasil-safety-questions-and-answers>

2. Merck & Co., Inc. [homepage on the Internet]. New Jersey: Merck & Co., Inc. c2008. Merck Responds to Questions about Adverse Events Reported following Vaccination with GARDASIL®. Available from: http://www.merck.com/newsroom/press_releases/product/2008_0708.html Accessed 07/18, 2008

The Last Dose

"Whatever the mind can conceive and believe, the mind can achieve."

~ Dr. Napoleon Hill, [1883-1970, American author]

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Bernie R. Olin, Pharm.D., Director