

Public Health

Seattle & King County

Immunization Program
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Importance of Completing the Hib Primary Series

Providing the full, three-dose primary series of Haemophilus influenzae type B (Hib)-containing vaccine to infants is of critical importance to the prevention of invasive Hib disease. Children needing doses in the primary series of Hib vaccine at this time should receive Pentacel[®], the DTaP-IPV-Hib combination vaccine. Children who have completed the primary series of DTaP and/or IPV but not Hib may receive *either* Pentacel[®] or single-antigen Hib vaccine to complete a primary Hib schedule (see: www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/downloads/pentacel-guidance.pdf for recommendations). **Please continue to defer the 4th dose of Hib for all healthy children regardless of whether you have sufficient inventory of ActHIB[®] or Pentacel[®].**

Currently, only 13% of King County's monthly Hib allocation from the Washington State Department of Health is single-antigen Hib and 87% is Pentacel[®]. To maximize the number of children protected from Hib, all VFC providers receiving Pentacel[®] should be using it for the primary series at this time.

Completion of the 3-dose Hib primary series is absolutely essential to fully protect infants. Experience with Hib vaccine clinical trials has shown that an incomplete primary series will not accomplish basic protection through the highest-risk period. This is especially critical during the current shortage in which booster doses are not being administered to healthy children. The booster dose is needed to reduce carriage of the Hib bacterium, and the increasing number of toddlers without this protection from carriage means that Hib could come back into the population and infect an incompletely protected infant – one that did not receive the full primary series.

Experience in the United Kingdom (UK) shows the importance of the booster dose in reducing carriage. Reduction of carriage provides direct and indirect protection from invasive Hib disease. Since the start of their program, the UK has vaccinated with only a primary series. Unlike the U.S., they had continued transmission of Hib which prompted them to institute a booster dose, after which their rates of invasive Hib disease declined. **Because we do not currently have enough vaccine for routine use of the booster dose, it is especially important to directly protect infants by completing the primary series with available Hib-containing vaccine.**

Merck has projected that their Hib products will return to the market in mid-2009, although the precise timing is not known with certainty. Until then, providers must use Pentacel[®] to supplement their shrinking supplies of single-antigen Hib vaccine. If you feel that you do not have sufficient Pentacel[®], more is available – please contact the King County Vaccines For Children Program at (206) 296-4774 for ordering information.

New Provider Resource for Evidence-Based Practice

As a result of a bill passed by the Washington State legislature in 2007 aimed at improving access to health care for everyone in Washington, beginning in January 2009, health care practitioners throughout Washington will be able to find online information to support patient care through a brand-new web site, known as **HEAL-WA**. One section of that bill encouraged practitioners to use evidence-based information to make patient care decisions, and required the University of Washington Health Sciences Libraries to make this information available online to a variety of health care providers across the state.

The HEAL-WA web site will contain selected electronic databases, online textbooks, and journals, all available for use by practitioners who are members of one of the more than a dozen professions named in the legislation and who are licensed to practice in Washington State. You will be able to access the web site from any computer that has an internet connection, and anyone who is authorized to use the site will be able to use all of its resources. You can find more information at <http://plonedev.hsl.washington.edu/HealWA/about/heal-wa-faq>.

Why does flu vaccination matter for children?

See families affected by influenza tell their stories at <http://www.youtube.com/cdcflu>



Vaccines For Children

Program News and Alerts

HOLIDAY SHIPPING DEADLINES

The last day to order vaccines in December is Tuesday, December 9th by 5 pm. Regular shipping resumes on Monday, January 5, 2009. Shipping deadlines are set by McKesson Specialty, the vaccine distributor. Holiday schedules and shipping volumes jeopardize the safe delivery of temperature-sensitive vaccines.

PENTACEL GUIDANCE

The CDC has advised that Pentacel can be administered to any child 6 weeks through 4 years of age, without contraindication to any component, for whom DTaP, IPV, and Hib vaccines are indicated. A combination vaccine like Pentacel may be used whenever any component(s) of the combination is indicated and no other component of the vaccine is contraindicated. This means that Pentacel can be used when a child needs one or two components, but does not need the others. Contraindications and precautions for Pentacel are the same for DTaP, IPV, and Hib vaccines. Please call the VFC program if you have questions about introducing Pentacel into your schedule. Usage guidelines are the same for both monovalent Hib and for Pentacel: provide the three primary series doses and defer the 4th dose for healthy children.

UPDATE YOUR VACCINE EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

With wintery weather already upon us, this is the perfect time of year to review and update your vaccine emergency response plan. Various situations may compromise vaccine storage conditions, such as refrigerator or freezer malfunctions, power failures, weather disruptions, or other emergencies. A generic emergency response plan is located in your VFC manual, and a detailed vaccine storage and handling toolkit is located at http://www2a.cdc.gov/vaccines/ed/shtoolkit/pages/SH_plans.htm. Keep a written copy of your emergency plan in the Styrofoam coolers used to transport your vaccines, along with a blank inventory form and temperature log.

VACCINE CHAMPION – NOVEMBER 2008

November's Vaccine Champion Merit Badge goes to **Rachel Victorin at Public Health's Columbia clinic**. When another VFC provider ran out of flu vaccine, Rachel was kind enough to loan the provider 100 doses of Columbia's flu vaccine supply. We admire Rachel's generosity and cooperative spirit! Way to go!

VFC STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

Our main number is (206) 296-4774. For questions on **ordering or VFC Program policies**, please contact Darren Robertson or Libby Page. For questions about **monthly reports**, please contact Anna Bero or Katy Ellis. For **storage questions**, you may speak with Susan Tower, Darren Robertson, or Libby Page. For **clinical questions**, call the main number and ask to speak with an immunization nurse. We are available to answer your questions Monday through Friday, from 8 am to 5 pm.

Announcing Two New Parent Education Resources

"Clear Answers & Smart Advice About Your Baby's Shots"

Dr. Ari Brown, a pediatrician in private practice since 1995, is coauthor of *Baby 411: Clear Answers & Smart Advice for Your Baby's First Year* (Windsor Peak Press).

In response to the recent media attention given to vaccines, autism, and other controversies concerning vaccines, the Immunization Action Coalition (IAC) has reprinted a special excerpt from *Baby 411* that answers these questions and more. This document is online at www.immunize.org/catg.d/p2068.pdf.

"When Do Children And Teens Need Vaccinations?"

The Immunization Action Coalition (IAC) recently updated its parent-education print resource "When Do Children and Teens Need Vaccinations?" To access the updated version of this resource, go to: www.immunize.org/catg.d/p4050.pdf.

IAC's Print Materials web section offers healthcare professionals and the public nearly 250 FREE, English-language materials (many also available in translation), which we encourage website users to print out, copy, and distribute widely. To access all of IAC's free print materials, go to: www.immunize.org/printmaterials.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITY: "Talking About Vaccine Safety With Parents and Patients"

California Distance Learning Health Network recently announced the availability of a two-part webcast, "Talking About Vaccine Safety with Parents and Patients." In this two-part series, Dr. Mark Sawyer from the San Diego County Immunization Branch, and a pediatrics professor at the University of California, San Diego, presents important information designed to help public health professionals understand and communicate about vaccine safety issues with patients and families.

Part 1 covers why vaccine safety has been in the public spotlight, where parents are likely to hear about vaccine safety, and how media and the Internet influence public perceptions. It presents effective communication strategies when talking about immunization.

Part 2 includes a discussion of the major controversies surrounding vaccine safety and the delivery of vaccines and talking points to help health professionals address specific concerns. Key resources and web links are provided for further information.

Public Health Café webcasts are each approximately 15-30 minutes in length and can be viewed at any time, on demand. To access the webcasts, go to <http://cdlhn.com/default>, then click "Public Health Café" on the left sidebar.

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Available in alternate formats