

Public Health

Seattle & King County

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Vaccine Court rules that MMR vaccine does not cause autism

On February 12, three Special Masters of the U.S. Court of Federal Claims issued separate rulings related to autism and vaccine injury compensation cases. As reported in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) February 2009 Immunization Works newsletter, "... each of the Special Masters ruled that the measles-mumps-rubella vaccine, whether administered alone or in conjunction with thimerosal-containing vaccines, were not causal factors in the development of autism or autism spectrum disorders."

The rulings are part of the Omnibus Autism Proceeding created by the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program to handle the large number of claims (more than 4,900) that vaccines induce autism. The rulings can be appealed.

Also on February 12, Every Child By Two (ECBT) issued a press release on the rulings, and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), American Medical Association issued statements.

To access the three rulings, go to:
www.uscfc.uscourts.gov/node/5026

To access the ECBT press release, go to:
www.vaccinateyourbaby.org/news/releases/2009/021209_press_release.cfm

To access the February issue of Immunization Works, go to: www.cdc.gov/vaccines/news/newsletters/imwrks Click on the link titled "FEB" under the banner titled "2009 Newslet-

ters Available Online."

To access the HHS statement, go to: www.hhs.gov/news/press/2009pres/02/20090212a.html

To access the AAP statement, go to: www.aap.org/featured/vaccinecourt.htm

To access the AMA statement, go to: www.ama-assn.org/ama/no-index/news-events/vaccines-autism.shtml

This information was published in IAC (Immunization Action Coalition) Express Issue #780 on February 16, 2009. IAC Express is a weekly email immunization information service for health professionals. To subscribe to IAC Express, go to: www.immunize.org/subscribe

Excellent science-based resource for parents on vaccines and autism

The National Network for Immunization Information (NNii) recently added an essay to its website that outlines the scientific evidence showing that there is no association between vaccines and autism. The essay is adapted from chapter 8 of the book "Do Vaccines Cause That?! A Guide for Evaluating Vaccine Concerns", by Martin Myers, MD, and Diego Pineda, MS. They are, respectively, the editor and the science writer for NNii. To access the essay, go to:

www.immunizationinfo.org/thimerosal_mercury_detail.cfv?id=146

The book "Do Vaccines Cause That?!" is available at bookstores and at www.dovaccinescausetthat.com

More Evidence That Thimerosal in Vaccines Does Not Cause Autism

The February issue of *Pediatrics* published a new study called "Neuropsychological Performance 10 Years After Immunization in Infancy With Thimerosal-Containing Vaccines". The study compared neuropsychological performance of 2 groups of children exposed randomly to different amounts of thimerosal through immunization 10 years after vaccination. Researchers found small differences, which they concluded "might be attributable to chance." Only one case of autism was found, and that was in the group that received the lower level of thimerosal. The study is available online at <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/abstract/123/2/475>

Get your VacScene newsletter sooner!

Did you know you can read the *VacScene* newsletter online—and it's available in PDF format so you can print your own copy—about ten days before your paper copy arrives in the mail? Go to the link on the right side of the *VacScene* homepage at www.kingcounty.gov/health/vacscene to subscribe to email updates and be alerted when a new issue is online.

Subscribe online now to receive an email update to alert you that a new *VacScene* issue has been posted.

NOTE: Because of rising mailing costs and to reduce our use of paper, beginning July 1, 2009, the newsletter will be mailed only to those who specifically request a paper copy. Stay tuned for details!



Vaccines For Children

Program News and Alerts

WHAT IS A SITE VISIT? Everything You Wanted to Know But Were Too Busy to Ask – Part I

Site visits originate as a requirement by the CDC, which oversees the federal Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program. Here in King County, Public Health is responsible for visiting 25% of the VFC enrollment each year. We bring with us to the site visit the CDC-authored “checklist,” reference materials, thermometers, and a variety of tools designed to help providers manage their immunization services.

In advance of the visit, you will receive a “readiness checklist.” Everything to be discussed during the actual site visit is listed there; review it carefully and you can rest assured that you will be well-prepared. Pre-site visit questions are welcome! Your visitors will typically be one Public Health immunization nurse and one VFC Program representative. The visit itself consists largely of an interview, during which we discuss all vaccine-related activities: clinic staff are asked to describe or show us how each vaccine is stored, how it is given, how it is documented, and how it is accounted for. A new requirement this year is a system for VFC eligibility screening; providers will be asked to show us how insurance status is tracked and documented.

We check refrigerator and freezer temperatures to assure they are correct and that your thermometers are accurate. We check patient charts for the seven required elements of documentation (on the readiness checklist), and make sure that your reference materials are up-to-date. Larger practices are asked to prepare a selection of children’s medical records, which will be used to create a snapshot of the practice’s immunization coverage rate for children 24-35 months of age. *Providers who are consistent and careful (active?) users of CHLD Profile can skip this part because the assessment can be done directly from the registry.* Please note! Not only do we ask questions, but we’re ready to answer *your* questions, too!! Tell us how we can support you in providing quality immunization services for your patients. We aim to keep the visit informal, helpful, interesting, and as un-stressful as possible.

Next month, Part II: After the Site Visit.

Ordering Vaccine

Use the current order form: The current form is always available at: www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/communicable/immunization/vfc.aspx (scroll to bottom of page).

Complete the form: “Doses Used” and “Doses on Hand” must be listed *for all vaccines*. Write down the correct ID numbers, telephone and fax, and receiving hours.

Allow two weeks: Place your order when you have at least a two-week supply of vaccine on hand. Allow up to two weeks for delivery (varicella, 4 weeks).

Confirmation: Call anytime to confirm receipt of your Vaccine Request, but you will also receive a confirmation fax with a “deliver by” date and a list of changes made (if any) to your order based on usage and inventory history.

When to order: Order vaccine throughout the month if all monthly reports are up-to-date and the submitted order is complete.

Receiving vaccine: Check contents against the packing slip. Call Public Health the same day if they do not match. Late reports of packing errors are more difficult to trace and correct.

Did you know...

..about dosage amount in single-dose containers?

When giving vaccine from a single dose vial, withdraw and administer the entire amount, even if it’s a little more than the 0.5 ml or 1.0 ml dose recommended in the package insert.

If the vaccine must be reconstituted, withdraw all of the diluent (specific for that vaccine) into the syringe. Inject all of the diluent from the syringe into the vial of lyophilized (freeze-dried) vaccine, and agitate to mix thoroughly. Then withdraw the entire contents into the same syringe and inject the total volume of restored vaccine subcutaneously. NOTE: There is no need to change needles between reconstituting and administering vaccine.

New Immunization Requirements to Attend School and Preschool/Child Care

School and childcare immunization requirements for the 2009-2010 school year are posted on the Washington State Department of Health website.

You can find a summary of the specific requirements for varicella, Tdap, hepatitis B, and pneumococcal conjugate vaccines (for preschool/child care only) at: www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/immunize/documents/updatewinter08.pdf

The Certificate of Immunization Status has been revised and new Certificate of Exemption form is now a separate document. You can find both of these documents at: www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/immunize/schools/mailings.htm

Training Opportunity: Immunization Update: Emerging Issues and New Directions

Friday, April 17, 2009 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Swedish Medical Center/First Hill – Glaser Auditorium

This conference is intended for primary-care providers, nurses, and other allied health professionals involved in immunizations, in the areas of family, general, internal, and pediatric medicine. National experts will present risk-communication strategies that providers can use to respond to “vaccine-hesitant” parents and families that have specific vaccine safety concerns or have questions about alternative immunization schedules. Attendees will also learn about proven strategies to improve their practice’s immunization coverage rates, special population vaccination recommendations, local vaccine-preventable disease outbreak data, the statewide immunization registry, and the latest information about new vaccines, including those in development. For more information, go to www.swedish.org/cme. **Register by April 6 and save \$30.**

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