



The Immune Response

November 2001

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CSL

Vaccines

Please copy and distribute to all immunisation providers in your practice or health centre. Thank you.

Childhood pneumococcal (prevenar) vaccination program

Good news! NSW is almost ready to begin a childhood pneumococcal vaccination program for at risk children. The vaccine, Prevenar, will be supplied free of charge to all Aboriginal children under the age of two and children with the medical conditions specified below:

- \$ Diseases compromising immune response to pneumococcal disease.
- \$ Congenital immune deficiency (including symptomatic IgG subclass or isolated IgA deficiency but excluding children where monthly immunoglobulin infusion is required).
- \$ Diseases associated with

immunosuppressive therapy or radiation therapy (including corticosteroid therapy equivalent to greater than 2mg/kg of prednisone for more than 4 weeks) where there is sufficient immune reconstitution for vaccine response to be expected.

- \$ Compromised splenic function due to sickle haemoglobinopathies or congenital or acquired asplenia.
- \$ HIV infection.
- \$ Renal failure or relapsing or persistent nephrotic syndrome.
- \$ Anatomical abnormalities associated with higher rates or severity of pneumococcal disease
- \$ Cardiac disease associated

with cyanosis or cardiac failure
\$ Proven or presumptive cerebrospinal fluid leak.

Immunisation providers will be contacted shortly by letter outlining the procedure to obtain the vaccine.

Meningococcal group C vaccine

The Public Health Unit has been advised that Meningitec vaccine is now available commercially. It is a conjugated vaccine specific for meningococcal C disease, and unlike the older polysaccharide vaccines, it gives long term protection for all ages above 6 weeks old. The public will be able to buy it for roughly

\$58 - \$70, depending on the mark-ups by wholesalers and pharmacists.

Practitioners are reminded that it does only protect against the C strain of meningococcal disease and that the Northern Rivers area has mainly strain B meningococcal disease. It is important that parents know that it will only protect against C strain and therefore continue to be vigilant for early signs of meningococcal disease. As ATAGI has not yet made any recommendations about the use of the vaccine, this information is not an endorsement from the Department of Health for its use.

BRIEFS

Discussion paper on 5th dose of OPV/IPV

As members of the public you are invited to put forward your view on the omission of the 5th dose of OPV/IPV given at 15yrs of age. This opportunity is only available until December 14. Please see website for more info. If you don't have access to the web but still want to be part of the discussion, contact your immunisation project officer who can print it off for you.
<http://www.health.gov.au/pubhlth/immunise/consult.htm>

School cert books & orange immunisation record stickers

The Public Health Unit now has a new supply of school certificate books and the orange immunisation record stickers. Anyone wanting them can contact the Public Health Unit on (02) 66 207514.
~ Marianne Trent, email: mtren@nrhs.health.nsw.gov.au

Immunisation resources

www.nrdgp.org.au/resources.html

www.health.gov.au/pubhlth/immunise/information.htm

Immunisation articles

www.nrdgp.org.au/projects/immunisation/home.html

ACIR website

<http://www1.hic.gov.au/general/acircirhome>

Provision of free hepatitis B vaccine for pre-adolescents

NSW Health wishes to remind GPs of the importance of achieving optimal coverage to prevent the significant morbidity and mortality associated with hepatitis B in the community.

In NSW, hepatitis B vaccine (thiomersal free paediatric H-B-Vax II) is provided free of charge to GPs and other immunisation service providers for pre-adolescents at 10 years of age (unless they have received a previous course, ie. those born after 1 May 2000).

The vaccine is to be administered in three doses over a six month period as follows:

\$1st dose hepatitis B vaccine - 10 years of age.

\$ 2nd dose hepatitis B vaccine - one month later.

\$ 3rd dose hepatitis B vaccine - five months after 2nd dose.

The vaccine may be ordered from the NSW Vaccine Centre on the usual vaccine order form.

For further information about anything appearing in *The Immune Response* call Gae McDonald, Northern Rivers, 6622 4453 Cheryl Colley, Tweed Valley, 6672 5158.