

CT DEPT. PUBLIC HEALTH, IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM
 Commissioner: J. Robert Galvin, M.D.



Updated Childhood/Adolescent Immunization Schedules

The 2008 Immunization Schedules for Persons 0 – 18 and the catch-up immunization schedule have recently been approved by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, American Academy of Pediatrics, and American Academy of Family Physicians.

The childhood schedule expands the recommendation for the intranasal spray influenza vaccine, FluMist, to include children from 2 to 5 years of age who are healthy and don't have a history of asthma or wheezing. The vaccine, which contains a weakened form of the live virus and is sprayed in the nose, is now approved for healthy persons between 2 and 49 years of age.

Meningococcal Conjugate Vaccine (MCV4) is now recommended for routine vaccination of children 11 – 12 years of age and of adolescents 13 – 18 years of age who have not been previously vaccinated and other people at increased risk of meningococcal disease, including college freshmen living in dorms and military recruits.

The new schedule also updates recommendations for use of pneumococcal vaccine. Healthy children 24 through 59 months of age who are incompletely vaccinated should receive one dose of PCV4. More information about the schedule can be found in the full article in CDC's January 11, 2008 Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. For a copy of this MMWR article visit www.cdc.gov/mmwr.

To access free copies of the new immunization schedules visit www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/schedules.



**National Infant Immunization Week
 19 - 26 April, 2008**
Love them. Protect them. Immunize them.

National Infant Immunization Week (NIIW) annually highlights the importance of protecting infants from vaccine-preventable diseases and celebrates the achievements of immunization programs and their partners in promoting healthy communities. NIIW is an opportunity to raise community awareness, provide education to healthcare workers, and promote infant immunization through media events.

This year CT is among 3 states, including Rhode Island and Washington, selected by CDC to host special NIIW kick-off events. Details about planned events will be forthcoming and will be available on the DPH website under featured links.

For more information about NIIW and for free resources for planning your own NIIW activities, please visit www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niiw.

If you would like assistance in planning a local NIIW event and /or would like to advertise your event on the DPH website, please contact Carolann Kapur @ (860) 509-7732.



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The Epicenter



The VFC program is a federally funded program that provides vaccines at no cost for children who might not otherwise be vaccinated because of inability to pay. Immunization providers enrolled in the VFC program receive vaccines free of charge to administer to all eligible children.

Enrolled providers sign a Provider Agreement form to comply with a number of conditions including periodic inspections of vaccines and records by Immunization Program staff. These visits are called AFIX (for Assessment, Feedback, Incentive and Exchange of Information) / VFC visits and are intended to ensure that providers are following the rules of the VFC program including storing, handling and administering vaccines correctly. These site visits also serve as an opportunity for Immunization Program staff to provide hands-on education and training to provider office staff.

In 2007 Immunization Program staff conducted a total of 120 AFIX/VFC visits. While the vast majority of provider offices are complying with the rules of the VFC program, a number of errors were noted in some practices. The following reminders are based on some of the most important and most common errors.

- ◆ Record the temperature of your refrigerators/freezers twice a day (in the morning and in the afternoon).
- ◆ If temperatures are not in the correct temperature range — immediately call the Immunization Program and staff will help you evaluate if the vaccine is still usable. (For refrigerators correct temperature is 35 -- 46 °F, 2°-8°C and for freezers 5 °F, -15°C)
- ◆ Have a written vaccine storage back-up plan, should your office lose power and you need to move vaccine to another location.
- ◆ Provide the most current Vaccine Information Statements (VIS) each time an immunization is given. To automatically receive updated VIS, sign up at www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pub/vis.

TIP OF THE ISSUE:

To access Immunization Program policy memos on the CT Department of Public Health website go to www.ct.gov/dph and click on “Parents and Children” then “Immunizations” then “Vaccine Policy Memos”.

Hib Vaccine Update

The recall of two brands of Merck Hib vaccines in December 2007 has created a shortage that is expected to last through the end of 2008. Eleven lots of PedvaxHIB and two lots of Comvax totaling nearly 1.2 million doses were recalled because Merck could not assure the sterility of equipment used during manufacture of these lots. To address the shortage, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has released some Hib vaccine from its stockpile and is working with Sanofi Pasteur to step up production of its Hib vaccine — ActHib. CDC has also recommended that providers temporarily defer administering the Hib vaccine booster dose, except for children with high-risk conditions/characteristics, including sickle cell disease, leukemia, malignant tumors, HIV and certain other immunocompromising conditions, asplenia; or who are American Native, or Alaskan Native.

Prior to the Hib vaccine shortage, the CT Immunization Program was supplying PedvaxHIB. Starting with January vaccine orders and for the foreseeable future, the Immunization Program is providing ActHib. Providers may place Hib orders on a monthly basis but should only request a one-month supply of Hib vaccine.

For patients who started their Hib series with PedvaxHIB, the following guidelines should be followed:

- ◆ If the first 2 doses of PedvaxHIB were administered as the primary series, any Hib vaccine can be administered for the booster dose at 12 – 15 months when supplies permit.
- ◆ If only the first dose of PedvaxHIB was administered, the primary series can be completed with 2 additional doses of ActHib administered at least 4 weeks apart, followed by a booster dose of any Hib vaccine at 12 – 15 months when supplies permit.

For more information see the December 21, 2007 MMWR. If you have any questions, please call the Immunization Program at (860) 509-7929 or visit the Department of Public Health website to view policy memos related to the Hib vaccine shortage.

Who's your Epidemiologist?

Region 1 (Fairfield County area)
Paul Sookram (860) 509-7835

Region 2 (New Haven area)
Stephanie Poulin (860) 509-7811

Region 3 (eastern CT)
Sharon Dunning (860) 509-7757

Region 4 (Hartford area)
Linda Greengas (860) 509-8153

Region 5 (northwestern CT)
Jennifer Vargas (860) 509-7901





CIRTS Update

Drum Roll Please!



The Immunization Program will be rolling out a new web-based registry soon.

Benefits of the new registry:

- Easy-to-use tabular format
- Real-time look-up of immunization histories of children enrolled in CIRTS
- Provides recommended dates for vaccine administration based on the ACIP/AAP/AAFP schedule
- Determines earliest date on which vaccines can be validly administered and date after which vaccination will be overdue
- Determines invalid vaccination that needs to be repeated
- Runs reminders for any child due an immunization in the next month
- Runs recall reports to identify children late for vaccinations
- Provides a record of outreach attempts to children late for immunizations
- Prints an official Immunization History that can be used for school, day care and camp

In February, a Provider User Group will test-drive the new registry to provide feedback and suggestions for improving our training manual and training procedures.

Stay tuned for more information on roll-out of the new registry. In the meantime if you need immunization histories or have any questions, please call Nancy Caruk @ 860-509-7912.

Local IAP Coordinators

Bridgeport

Joan Lane
(203) 372-5503

Danbury

Irene Litwak
(203) 730-5240

East Hartford

Marie Rorrio
(860) 291-7322

Hartford

Leticia Marulanda
(860) 547-1426 x7033

Ledgelight

Ginny Haas
(860) 448-4882 x352

Meriden

Valerie Bryden
(203) 630-4251

Naugatuck Valley

Elizabeth Green
(203) 881-3255

New Britain

Ramona Anderson
(860) 612-2777

New Haven

Jennifer Hall
(203) 946-7097

Northeast District

Danielle DaSilva
(860) 928-6541 x2013

Norwalk

Pam Bates
(203) 854-7728

Stamford

Cynthia Vera
(203) 977-5098

Torrington

Sue Sawula
(860) 489-0436

Waterbury

Randy York
(203) 346-3907

West Haven

Betty Murphy
(203) 937-3665

Windham

Karin Davis
(860) 423-4534

Other areas

Johanna Castaneda
(860) 509-7241

Did You Know?

- ◆ Our current registry contains immunization information for **453,415 children**.
- ◆ Approximately **90% of children** born since 1998 have been enrolled in CIRTS.
- ◆ CIRTS began as a pilot project with the city of Hartford in 1993, was expanded to include all Medicaid children in 1994, and went statewide in 1998.
- ◆ State law (Public Act 94-90) requires every pediatric provider to submit immunization histories to CIRTS.
- ◆ Last year CIRTS provided over 15,000 Blue Forms (School Health Assessment records) for nearly 200 providers.



From the desks of Maria Heinz, Carol Natitus and Claudia Soprano
Your Vaccine Order Support Team!



Immunization Program #: 860 509-7929
Fax: 860 509-8371

As 2008 begins, here are a few reminders and suggestions for transmitting your vaccine orders and managing vaccines.

We are now back to a tiered ordering schedule. Please refer to the memo sent 2/28/07 to review provider ordering cycles.

For doses on hand, if there is more than one expiration date for a particular vaccine, please break down the doses for each expiration date. For example, if you have 15 doses of PCV with two expiration dates include the quantity and expiration dates for both lots of PCV.

When faxing orders, it's a good idea to call to verify that your order has been received. At times orders have not been received even though the provider fax has confirmed transmission. Vaccine Order Forms are due by the **1st business day of the month -- no exceptions.**

The Doses Administered page is part of your vaccine order. Please fax it along with your order. Remember to use numeric numbers, not hash marks -- hash marks are very difficult to read especially on a fax.

All vaccine returns due to expiration or spoilage must be returned to McKesson. Do not send them back to the Immunization Program or dispose of on your own. Vaccines are to be returned in a McKesson box. On the inside flap of each box is a return label. A completed vaccine return form must be faxed to the Immunization Program and a copy placed in the box with the vaccines. If you can't find the label or one is not included in the box you can go to vfcbboxreturn@mckesson.com.

It is not "OK" to let vaccine doses expire. It is the responsibility of the provider to either use or transfer all the vaccines they have ordered. Please notice the expiration dates when preparing your vaccine order. It is much easier to transfer vaccines with a two to three month expiration date than to try and move them in the last month. If you get stuck and can't find another provider in your area, call us! We can then open up the search statewide.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your order please do not hesitate to call us.



CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC HEALTH

Keeping Connecticut Healthy

410 Capitol Avenue, MS # 11 MUN
P.O. Box 340308
Hartford, CT 06134-0308
Phone: (860) 509-7929
www.ct.gov/dph

Co-Editors: Debbye Rosen, BSN, MS
Vincent Sacco, MS, Program Manager
Melinda Mailhot, BS, MSPH