

NEW VACCINE RECOMMENDATIONS THAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

Anisa Ssengoba, M.D.
Family Medicine
Church Square Family Health Center
7963 Euclid Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44103

There have been numerous changes with immunizations just over that last couple of years. Don't be surprised if you and/or your children are not up to date with the current immunization recommendations. This article will introduce new vaccines and explain who should get them and when. Hopefully, by the end of this article you will make an appointment with your family doctor, pediatrician or internist to ensure that you become up to date and take all the necessary steps to stay healthy.

Herpes Zoster (ZOSTAVAX®)- On October 25, 2006, the ACIP made recommendations for use of a vaccine for prevention of herpes zoster (shingles) and post-herpetic neuralgia. A single dose of zoster vaccine is recommended for adults 60 years of age and older whether or not they report a prior episode of herpes zoster.

HPV (GARDASIL®) – This vaccine used to protect against HPV, which can cause cervical cancer. It was licensed in June of 2006. It is recommended that females receive it at 11-12 years of age, but the vaccine series can be given to females as young as 9 years of age. Ideally, the vaccine should be administered before potential exposure to HPV through sexual contact. The vaccine can be given to women up to age 26. It consists of three doses. The second and third doses should be given 2 and 6 months after the first dose.

Rotavirus (RotaTeq®) - In February 2006, RotaTeq® was licensed for use among infants to prevent rotavirus. Rotavirus is a viral disease that causes diarrhea. Infants should receive 3 doses by mouth at ages 2, 4, and 6 months.

MMR/Varicella (ProQuad®)- This is a combination vaccine that protects against measles, mumps, rubella and varicella (chicken pox). It was licensed in September of 2005. It should be given at one year of age and repeated at age four. All children should have two doses of MMR and varicella.

Tdap (ADACEL™/ BOOSTRIX®) - This is a vaccine used to prevent tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (whooping cough). Previously only infants received protection against whooping cough, however numbers of cases have been increasing, thus the vaccine was developed. On June 30, 2005 it was recommended that Tdap vaccines be used in adolescents aged 11-18 years in place of tetanus and diphtheria toxoids (Td) vaccines (booster shot). Adults aged 19- 64 are also recommended to have at least one dose.

MCV4 (Menactra®) - This vaccine is used to prevent bacterial meningitis. It was licensed in January of 2005 for use in persons 11-55. It is recommended that adolescents receive it when they are 11 or 12. If the vaccine was not given at that time, it should be done before high school entry. This vaccine should be given to older adults if they fall into certain high risk groups, including freshmen living in dormitories, military recruits, etc.

HEP A (VAQTA®, HAVRIX®)- This vaccine is used to prevent Hepatitis A infections. Hepatitis A is a viral infection that causes diarrhea. Hepatitis A vaccine is now universally recommended for all children at age 1 year (12-23 months). The 2nd dose in the series should be administered at least 6 months after the first. Older children/ adults may be vaccinated if they plan to travel outside the United States or are high risk.

Influenza (FLU)- The flu vaccine is now recommended for children ages 6-59 months, pregnant women, persons aged ≥ 50 years, persons of any age with certain chronic medical conditions (i.e. asthma, diabetes, COPD), persons who live with or care for persons at high risk and health-care workers.

If you and/or your children are missing vaccines, don't hesitate. Call your doctor today!