

Community Medicine Newsletter

EBOLA UPDATE

Countries currently affected by Ebola are Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Nigeria and Senegal have been declared free of Ebola. There have been no Ebola cases in Canada, and the risk of an imported case remains very low. All returning travellers from affected areas are being identified at airports of entry and followed for 21 days by public health authorities. The risk of an unexpected case appearing in your office is exceedingly low.

If you are seeing patients who are febrile, have one or more symptoms of viral infection (malaise, myalgia, severe headache, conjunctival injection, pharyngitis, abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, bleeding, new maculopapular rash on the trunk) and have returned from Ebola affected areas within the last 21 days, please do the following:

- Isolate your patient in a side room. This room should be clear of removable items, where ever possible. Please make sure your office staff are aware that patients who identify themselves as being unwell and having visited an Ebola affected area in the past 21 days should not sit in the general waiting room area.
- Contact the VCH Medical Health Officer right away by calling 604-983-6701 (working hours) or 604-527-4893 (after hours).
- Staff in contact with the patient should don the appropriate personal protective equipment, if available (surgical facemask and eye protection, gloves, single use gown) and perform hand hygiene after removal.

Patients calling in to the clinic who are unwell and have history of travel to Ebola affected area in the past 21 days should be **advised not to visit the clinic**. Please take a history over the phone and consult the Medical Health Officer right away.

INFLUENZA IMMUNIZATION CAMPAIGN UPDATE

VCH influenza immunization campaign launched last week. Physicians who **missed** the first two vaccine distribution days can fax in an order to 604-983-6883. For those who already picked up their first allocations of vaccine we expect to have more vaccine to distribute early in November. Details of the next distribution day will be faxed out next week. Please start immunizing as soon as you have vaccine.

Flumist®: New this fall, a large portion of our nasal spray vaccine supply is the quadrivalent formulation. This vaccine provides protection against the three influenza strains in all other flu vaccines (A/California/7/2009 (H1N1), A/Texas/50/2012 (H3N2), B/Massachusetts/2/2012) and a second influenza B component, B/Brisbane/60/2008-like virus. The vaccine does not need to be treated any differently from the trivalent formulation in terms of storage, administration or schedule. This is an excellent product for children 2-17 years of age.

Cold chain supplies: We want to give a big thanks to physicians and office staff who presented to the flu vaccine distribution days with coolers, water blankets and ice packs. Vaccines are temperature sensitive products and cannot be released without these supplies. Offices lacking supplies can purchase them from most hardware or cold chain stores.

Influenza activity: We are seeing early indicators of Influenza A/H3N2 activity in BC, including five lab-confirmed outbreaks in long term care facilities. Please recommend immunization to all your high risk patients: seniors, children under five, pregnant women, and people with chronic health conditions.

HPV VACCINE (Gardasil®) SCHEDULE CHANGE

BC school-based HPV vaccine program changes from a 3-dose to a 2-dose program for girls 9-14 years of age: Starting October 20th, 2014, girls in grade 9 will no longer receive a third dose of the HPV vaccine if their prior 2 doses were given 6 months apart. This decision follows a recent change in recommendation by the Canadian National Advisory Committee on Immunization: Two or three doses are recommended for girls and boys starting their series prior to their 15th birthday; three doses are needed when starting series \geq 15 years of age. (Boys are not eligible for publicly funded HPV vaccine in British Columbia.) Evidence has accumulated over the last several years from many studies indicating that at younger ages, 2 doses are equivalent to 3 doses in terms of safety and protection offered by this vaccine.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to call our nurse on-call at 604-983-6700.

Best regards,



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