July 25, 2016

New Orange County Immunization Recommendation for Meningococcal Disease for Men Who Have Sex With Men (MSM)

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) is reporting an increase of serogroup C invasive meningococcal disease (IMD) in Southern California, particularly in Los Angeles County, Orange County and the city of Long Beach. The majority of infections have occurred in men who have sex with men (MSM). IMD includes meningitis, bacteremia and sepsis caused by Neisseria meningitidis bacteria, which are transmitted from person-to-person through respiratory droplets, usually during close contact.

Situation Update:
- Since Jan 1, 2016, a total of six cases of IMD have been identified in Orange County, with four of these associated with the serogroup C cluster in Southern California. Additional cases have been reported from the County of Los Angeles and the city of Long Beach. Over 75% of these cases have occurred since May 1.
- Approximately 75% of the cases associated with this cluster have been in men who have sex with men (MSM). No direct social connection between these cases has been found.
- One death, in an Orange County resident, has been reported associated with this cluster.

Because of this local increase in risk, the County of Orange Health Care Agency, in conjunction with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health and City of Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services, is expanding vaccination recommendations for meningococcal disease to include all gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men, in addition to all persons with HIV infection.

- A single dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV4) is adequate for non-HIV infected MSM
- Per prior CDC recommendations, all HIV-infected persons (≥2 months of age) should receive two doses of MCV4 vaccine 8-12 weeks apart, as their primary series. Previously vaccinated HIV-infected persons who received only one dose of vaccine should receive a second dose at the earliest opportunity, regardless of the time interval since previous dose. A booster dose should be given every 5 years if the previous dose was administered at ≥7 years of age. MCV4 is included on the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) formulary.

MCV4 vaccines (Menveo® or Menactra®) protect against serogroup C disease as well as disease caused by serogroups A, W and Y. Because meningococcal vaccine-induced immunity wanes, a booster dose can be considered for those whose last dose of MCV4 was ≥5 years ago. MSM who are HIV positive have been at particular risk in previous outbreaks of IMD in MSM. MSM who are not known to be HIV-infected and have not been tested in the past year should be offered HIV testing.

MSM who practice certain behaviors may be at increased risk, and in particular should be encouraged to get vaccinated. Increased risk has been associated with:
- Regularly have close or intimate contact with multiple partners, or seek partners through the use of online websites or phone applications
- Regularly visit crowded venues such as bars, parties, etc.
- Use of illegal drugs, cigarettes, marijuana, hookahs or spending time in smoky settings
For information on other groups who should receive the vaccine, please see http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/mening/who-vaccinate-hcp.html.

Individuals covered under this new recommendation who are uninsured or whose insurance does not cover the vaccine can be referred to the Orange County Health Care Agency to receive the meningococcal vaccine for low or no cost. There are two clinics located at 1725 W. 17th Street in Santa Ana that will offer vaccine to qualified individuals:

- Immunization Clinic: open 7:30 AM – 4:30 PM, Mon – Fri, closed for lunch 11:45 – 12:45.
- Testing, Treatment and Care Clinic: open Mon, Wed, Thurs and Fri 8AM – 4 PM, Tues 10 AM – 4PM.
- Both are walk-in clinics, so wait times can be expected.

Those needing just meningococcal vaccine should go to Immunization Clinic, but if STD and/or HIV testing is desired, please refer to Testing, Treatment and Care Clinic. For more information, please call the Health Referral Line at 800-564-8448.

All suspect, probable and confirmed meningococcal disease cases should be reported immediately to Orange County Health Care Agency Epidemiology at 714-834-8180. For more information, see http://ochealthinfo.com/phs/about/dcepi/epi or call 714-834-8180.