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nerable to strep throat than others. Moreover, it also explains our finding that an individual who is colonized with one of those two organisms and then is exposed to streptococcus has a 10-fold increased likelihood of developing strep throat.

It also helps explain the differential treatment effect of penicillin/amoxicillin versus other antibiotic classes. Both *M. cattarrhalis* and *H. influenzae* produce beta-lactamase, which inactivates penicillin and amoxicillin. Cephalosporins, on the other hand, have greater activity in the presence of beta-lactamase, while

macrolides such as azithromycin are completely immune to the enzyme.

Thus, it appears that beta-lactamase production, a well-described mechanism for in vitro antimicrobial resistance, is being enhanced by this additional coaggregation mechanism.

Based on this new information, my practice now uses cephalosporins as first-line treatment for strep throat. Cephalexin is a good option because it's generic, and it's first-generation, so it is not as broad-spectrum. We prescribe it twice daily for 10 days.

Second choice would be either a second- or third-generation cephalosporin or

azithromycin, depending upon the degree of macrolide resistance in your community. Here in Rochester, where macrolide resistance is about 8%, we normally go with cefprozil, cefdinir, or cefpodoxime. All three are generic, although they're still not cheap—there's currently only one distributor. Cefprozil is the least expensive of the three, and there also is evidence that it eradicates the strep carrier state as well as the active infection (Clin. Ther. 2001;23:1889-900).

The Infectious Diseases Society of America is planning to issue new guidelines for the treatment of streptococcal pharyngitis sometime in 2008. Dr. Kaplan

is the chairman of the writing committee, and Dr. Casey is a member. The American Academy of Pediatrics' 2006 Red Book still recommends amoxicillin as first-line therapy, but I'm guessing that will not be the case in the next edition, due out in 2009.

I have no financial conflicts that are relevant to this article. ■

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## Merck Updates Vaccine Supply Delays, Shortages

Merck & Co. has issued an update on the status of its vaccine delays and shortages in a letter to physicians.

Merck announced that ProQuad (measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella virus vaccine live) will be unavailable for ordering through the rest of 2007, although existing back orders were filled through August. In the letter, the company said that it was too early to determine if ProQuad will be available in 2008.

Merck had earlier requested that customers transition from ProQuad to M-M-R II and Varivax (varicella vaccine). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention continues to report that current projections forecast an adequate supply to implement the recommended immunization schedule fully for varicella vaccine for all age groups.

Varivax is currently available in adequate supply, according to Merck, but customers should expect shipping delays of up to 15-20 business days. The company expects to return to normal delivery schedules in late September or early October, but in the meantime two additional shipping days have been added (Thursday for Friday delivery and Saturday for Monday delivery) and at least one order per office is being shipped—instead of the normal first-in, first-out model—to minimize the impact on customers with no supply of Varivax.

Production delays also have plagued Merck in manufacturing its pediatric and adult hepatitis A vaccine (Pediatric and Adult Vaqta). A manufacturing change that is under regulatory review started the delays, which have caused customers to experience 6- to 7-week shipment delays since late July 2007. The company said that orders for the vaccine that it received through early- to mid-September will continue to be filled on a 6- to 7-week back order, but orders that are received after mid-September will not be available for shipment until near the end of the first quarter of 2008.

The supply of GlaxoSmithKline's pediatric and adult hepatitis A vaccine (Pediatric and Adult Havrix) is adequate enough to meet demand; GSK has initiated plans to produce more Havrix to help ensure uninterrupted supply for the U.S. market, according to the CDC.

—Jeff Evans

### Oddly enough, the way they describe their GERD may be why it's often overlooked.



- #1 prescribed acid-suppressing agent by PGEs\*<sup>2</sup>
- Only FDA-approved PPI for kids as young as 12 months<sup>3,8</sup>
- Available as capsules and strawberry-flavored PREVACID for Oral Suspension or PREVACID SoluTab



#### Important safety and other information

- The safety and effectiveness of PREVACID have been established in patients 12 months to 17 years of age for the short-term treatment of symptomatic GERD and erosive esophagitis.
- PREVACID use in this population is supported by evidence from adequate and well-controlled studies in adults along with additional clinical and PK/PD studies performed in pediatric patients. The pediatric studies were uncontrolled, open-label studies performed in 66 patients aged 1 to 11 years old and 87 patients aged 12 to 17 years old. The safety and effectiveness of PREVACID have not been established in patients <1 year of age.
- The most frequently reported adverse events in patients aged 1 to 11 years were constipation (5%) and headache (3%).

References 1. Rudolph CD, Mazur LJ, Liptak GS, et al. *J Pediatr Gastroenterol Nutr.* 2001;32(suppl 2):S1-S31. 2. Data on file, TAP Pharmaceutical Products Inc. 3. PREVACID Complete Prescribing Information. 4. Aciphex® (rabeprazole sodium) Complete Prescribing Information. 5. Nexium® (esomeprazole magnesium) Complete Prescribing Information. 6. Prilosec® (omeprazole) Complete Prescribing Information. 7. Protonix® (pantoprazole sodium) Complete Prescribing Information. 8. Zegerid™ (omeprazole) Complete Prescribing Information.

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In patients aged 12 to 17 years, the most frequently reported adverse events were headache (7%), abdominal pain (5%), nausea (3%), and dizziness (3%). The adverse event profile in children and adolescents resembled that of adults taking PREVACID, where the most common adverse events were diarrhea (3.8%), abdominal pain (2.1%), and nausea (1.3%). Symptomatic response to therapy does not preclude the presence of gastric malignancy. PREVACID formulations are contraindicated in patients with known hypersensitivity to any component of the formulation.

Individual results may vary.

See adjacent page for brief summary of prescribing information.

\*Based on IMS Health Xponent® data, December 2005.

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