

Most Measles Cases in 2001-2004 Were Preventable

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More than half of all the measles cases reported among United States residents during 2001-2004 were preventable, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Although endemic measles has been eliminated from the United States, cases continue to be imported from other parts of the world, and infected travelers can

transmit the disease to susceptible contacts, the CDC said (MMWR 2005;54:817-20).

Of the 251 measles cases reported to the CDC during 2001-2004, 71% occurred among U.S. residents and 29% among non-residents. Of the 177 cases among U.S. residents, 100 (56%) were considered preventable, meaning that they occurred in persons for whom vaccination against measles is recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, but those individuals had not received 1 or

more doses of measles-containing vaccine.

Among the 177 U.S. residents, 52% (92) were aged 0-19 years and 48% (85) were aged 20 years or older. Nearly one-third (31%) had traveled abroad, while the other 69% were infected in the United States. More than three-fourths (77%) of the total group had not been vaccinated. Of those 136, only 7 cases (5%) were considered not preventable, because the individuals were born before 1957 and vaccination is not recommended for that age group.

Current recommendations for travelers include vaccination for infants 6-11 months of age and two doses of measles-containing vaccine for travelers aged 12 months and above. Yet the 100 preventable cases in this report included a total of 43 travelers: 17 infants aged 6-15 months, 11 children and adolescents aged 16 months to 19 years, and 15 adults aged 20 and older.

One of these cases was an 11-year-old girl who developed a rash 3 days after returning to the United States from the United Kingdom. She had close contact with an 11-month-old infant, who subsequently had contact with up to 234 persons at a summer camp 2 days before he also developed a rash. Thanks to extensive investigation and control efforts, no further cases were subsequently identified.

Measles cases among persons born before 1957 are rare. However, individuals in this age group who travel internationally might wish to consider vaccination, the CDC advised. Information on vaccination recommendations for travelers is available at www.cdc.gov/travel. ■

What blood-borne virus infects 4 times more Americans than HIV?

HEPATITIS C

2 out of 3 people with Hep C are undiagnosed

- Don't rely on liver enzyme tests alone: 1 out of 3 people with Hep C has normal ALTs
- Ask all of your patients about their risk for Hep C, because patients treated early may respond better
- Consider offering a Hep C test whenever you test for HIV or HBV

STOP IT SOONER THAN LATER. SCREEN.

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Prevnar: Invasive Pneumococcal Disease at Bay

Routine use of seven-valent pneumococcal conjugate vaccine in young children has dramatically reduced the incidence of vaccine-type and overall invasive pneumococcal disease in children and adults, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported.

The most substantial decline in the rate of vaccine-type disease has been in the target population of children less than 5 years old, according to an analysis comparing disease rates in 2003 with those in 1998-1999, when Prevnar was not available.

In this age group, vaccine-type invasive pneumococcal disease (IPD) decreased 94% from 80 cases per 100,000 population to 4.6 cases (MMWR 2005;54:893-7).

Incidence rates of vaccine-type IPD also declined among individuals outside the target population, with the largest reduction occurring in those 65 years and older.

The routine use of the vaccine prevented 29,599 expected vaccine-type IPD cases in 2003, according to the analysis conducted by the Active Bacterial Core surveillance of the Emerging Infections Program Network in cooperation with the CDC.

An estimated 9,140 cases of vaccine-type IPD were directly prevented by vaccinating children less than 5 years old. An additional 20,459 cases (69%) were prevented through indirect effects of the vaccine across all ages.

Among children less than 5 years old and adults aged 40 years or older, the reduction in vaccine-type IPD was offset by an increase in disease caused by pneumococcal serotypes not included in the seven-valent vaccine. There were a total of 4,721 projected additional cases of nonvaccine-type IPD across all age groups in 2003.

—Patrice Wendling