

25 May 2015

To: Edmonton Zone Physicians

Re: Rotavirus Vaccine

Context:

Effective June 1, 2015, rotavirus vaccine will be added to the Routine Immunization Program in Alberta. In an effort to decrease the burden of rotavirus illness in Alberta, Public Health will begin offering rotavirus vaccine to children at their 2-month and 4-month immunization appointments as of June 1, 2015.

Background:

Rotavirus is a leading cause of acute infectious diarrhea in infants and young children and affects approximately 95% of children by the age of 3 to 5 years. The incidence of disease is highest in children between 6 and 24 months of age, causing the majority of childhood gastroenteritis requiring hospitalization.

Rotavirus is highly infectious due to the small amount of virus needed to cause illness and the prolonged viral shedding in the stool (from a few days before, up to 21 days after onset of symptoms; peak shedding is 7 to 10 days). The virus is transmitted by the fecal-oral route and through close person-to-person contact. It can also be transmitted through fomites (e.g. toys). Good hand washing, particularly after changing diapers, before food preparation and especially before direct contact with an immune compromised individual will help to decrease the spread of the virus.

Action:


With the implementation of this new vaccine, it is important to ensure vigilance of reporting possible adverse events following immunization. Of particular importance will be the **surveillance of intussusception following administration of rotavirus vaccine**. Zone Medical Officers of Health are requesting notification to the Office of Medical Officer of Health at **780-433-3940** of any recently immunized infants who present the following symptoms that may be consistent with intussusception:

- severe sudden stomach pain
- persistent vomiting
- blood in the stool
- swollen abdomen
- high fever

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

References:

Alberta Health Services. Immunization Program Standards Manual. <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/10802.asp>
Alberta Health Services. Medical Officers of Health webpage. www.albertahealthservices.ca/7082.asp
ImmunizeAlberta. Immunization resources for parents. www.immunizealberta.ca



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