



Buncombe County Health and Human Services

Aging and Veteran's Services ~ Social Work Services
Public Assistance & Work Support Strategies ~ Public Health
Amanda Stone, MSW
Health and Human Services Director

October 2, 2013

Dear Medical Providers,

As you have likely heard by now, a 3 week old infant from Transylvania County died last week at Mission Hospital from pertussis. (See news release from NC DHHS below.) While the investigation into this case continues, there is much that we as providers can do to prevent further tragic deaths from vaccine-preventable diseases like pertussis.

First and foremost, all of us need to continue to encourage our patients, co-workers, friends and family to get their pertussis vaccine.

While ideally all individuals would receive this vaccination, there are some **populations on which we need to focus:**

1. Pregnant women

- In October 2012, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommended that **pregnant women receive a dose of Tdap during each pregnancy regardless of their prior history of receiving Tdap.**
- Tdap vaccine is recommended after 20 weeks gestation, and **optimally between 27 and 36 weeks gestation**, to maximize maternal antibody response and passive antibody transfer to the baby so they are protected at birth.

2. Postpartum women

- For women **who did not receive Tdap during their pregnancy**, Tdap should be administered **immediately postpartum.**

3. Close contacts to infants/young children (fathers, siblings, grandparents, caregivers, teachers, health-care personnel)

- ACIP recommends that **those who have or anticipate having close contact with an infant aged <12 months should receive a single dose of Tdap to protect against pertussis if they have not received Tdap previously.**

4. Health-care personnel (in addition to #3)

- **All health-care personnel** who have not or are unsure if they have previously received a dose of Tdap should receive a **one-time dose of Tdap** as soon as feasible.
- **Please make sure you & the staff in your clinic are up-to-date on your Tdap!**

There is **no** minimum time to wait after last Td vaccination to give a Tdap.

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It takes at least 2 weeks after Tdap vaccination to mount a maximal immune response.

- Therefore, it is best that families who are expecting a baby get their Tdap **at least 2 weeks** prior to the estimated due date.

If you are unable to provide Tdap vaccine to those in need, you can refer individuals to the Immunization Clinic at the Buncombe County Department of Health & Human Services (BCHHS) or their local health department.

- **BCHHS will provide Tdap to any pregnant woman who is at least 20 weeks gestation if she brings in a note from her prenatal provider which states the date on which she will be 20 weeks gestation.**
- BCHHS will bill insurance if clients are insured.
- BCHHS will provide Tdap free of charge to uninsured clients.

The Immunization Clinic of BCHHS:

- operates on a walk-in basis for routine vaccines like Tdap. No appointment is necessary.
- is located at 40 Coxe Avenue in downtown Asheville
- is open M-F 8am-5pm, except on County holidays
 - We ask that patients arrive *BEFORE* 4:30pm if at all possible.

If you have any questions, please contact me or the BCHHS Disease Control staff at 250-5109.

Together, as a medical community, let's do all we can to prevent another tragic infant death from pertussis.

Thank you,

Jenni

Jennifer Mullendore, MD, MSPH

Medical Director

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References:

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Updated Recommendations for Use of Tetanus Toxoid, Reduced Diphtheria Toxoid, and Acellular Pertussis Vaccine (Tdap) in Pregnant Women – Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), 2012. MMWR 2013;62(07):131-5. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/wk/mm6207.pdf>
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Tdap for Pregnant Women: Information for Providers. Last updated 28 Aug 2013. Cited 1 Oct 2013. <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/pertussis/tdap-pregnancy-hcp.htm>
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Immunization of Health-Care Personnel: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). MMWR 2011;60(RR-7):19-21. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/rr/rr6007.pdf>