

February 27, 2015

**LAC DPH Health Update:
Vaccinate High Risk Men Who Have Sex with Men (MSM) to Prevent Invasive Meningococcal
Disease**

*This message is intended for primary care, HIV, and infectious disease providers. Please
distribute as appropriate.*

Key message

- **LAC DPH continues to recommend meningococcal vaccine for men who have sex with men (MSM) at higher risk of invasive meningococcal disease (IMD) (see full LAC DPH Recommendation below).**

Situation

In April 2014, after observing high rates of invasive meningococcal disease among MSM, the Los Angeles County (LAC) Department of Public Health (DPH) recommended meningococcal vaccination for MSM at increased risk. The incidence rate over the prior 24 months (October 2012 to September 2014) was comparable to that found in college freshmen residing in dormitories – a group for whom the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend meningococcal vaccination.

LAC DPH is continuing to recommend meningococcal vaccination for both HIV-positive gay/MSM and HIV-negative gay/MSM whose activities put them at higher risk. The highest risk of meningococcal infection generally occurs during the first several months of the year so now is the time to vaccinate persons in identified risk groups.

LAC DPH Recommendation

The meningococcal vaccine should be offered to:

- All HIV-infected gay/MSM
- Gay/MSM, regardless of HIV status, who regularly have close or intimate contact with multiple partners or who seek partners through the use of digital applications (“apps”), particularly those who share cigarettes/marijuana or use illegal drugs.

Actions Requested of Providers

- ✓ Recommend meningitis vaccination to all gay/MSM patients at elevated risk for IMD (see above).
- ✓ Actively communicate with potentially at-risk patients about the benefit of meningococcal vaccination.
- ✓ Refer at-risk gay/MSM patients to DPH clinics for free vaccination if vaccination not feasible at your facility or elsewhere (see below).

Free Meningococcal Vaccine

LAC DPH will continue to make free meningococcal vaccine available to patients at five DPH public health clinics at various locations within LAC. The location and hours of public health clinics providing vaccine can be found at: <http://www.ph.lacounty.gov/ip/Docs/meningitisclinics.pdf>

Additional Meningitis Resources:

For health care providers (LAC DPH)

- Providers may call the Acute Communicable Disease Control Program with questions regarding meningococcal vaccine recommendations or IMD: 213-240-8653
- Meningococcal Conjugate Vaccines Factsheet
<http://www.ph.lacounty.gov/ip/Docs/MeningococcalFactSheet.pdf>
- Meningitis and meningococcal disease for health professionals including a weekly disease count:
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/Mening.htm>

For patients (LAC DPH)

- “Stop Before You Swap” LAC DPH meningitis resources for MSM including disease and risk-reduction information as well as vaccination locations:
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip/DiseaseSpecific/dontswap.htm>

Meningococcal disease (CDC): <http://www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/about/index.html>

This Health Update was sent by Dr. Jeffrey Gunzenhauser, Interim Health Officer, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health.