

# The Medical Letter®

## On Drugs and Therapeutics

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### A Reminder: Meningococcal Vaccine

The U.S. Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices has recommended administration of the quadrivalent conjugated polysaccharide meningococcal vaccine (*Menactra* – Sanofi Pasteur) to all persons 11 to 18 years old, particularly those entering high school and college freshmen living in dormitories.<sup>1,2</sup> The peak incidence of meningococcal disease, after early childhood, occurs in the 15-19 year-old age group. The conjugate vaccine is more immunogenic than the meningococcal capsular polysaccharide vaccine (*Menomune* – Sanofi Pasteur).

**ADVERSE EFFECTS** — The most common adverse reactions with the conjugate vaccine have been headache, fatigue and malaise, in addition to pain, redness and induration at the injection site. Guillain-Barré syndrome has occurred rarely.<sup>3</sup>

**CONCLUSION** — Previously unvaccinated children starting high school or going away to college this fall should receive a single dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine (*Menactra*).

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. Revised recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices to vaccinate all persons aged 11-18 years with meningococcal conjugate vaccine. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2007; 56:794.
2. *Menactra*: a meningococcal conjugate vaccine. *Med Lett Drugs Ther* 2005; 47:29.
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Update: Guillain-Barre syndrome among recipients of *Menactra* meningococcal conjugate vaccine — United States, October 2005-February 2006. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2006; 55:364.

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