

Update on ASTHO/CSTE/NACCHO/APHL Conf Calls (questions from Jan. 15, 2003)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Frequently Asked Questions supporting the National Smallpox Vaccination Program – To be posted on Member-only websites of ASTHO, NACCHO, CSTE, and APHL

Are people who have never been vaccinated against smallpox excluded from Stage 1 vaccination? (1/15/03)

No.

At many hospitals, the staff uniforms are washed in the hospital laundry. Are there any precautions that hospital laundry staff need to take when washing uniforms from vaccinated staff? (1/15/03)

Clothing or any other material that may have come in contact with the vaccination site and therefore be contaminated with vaccinia should be handled with special care. A separate hamper should be used for these items. Contact with these items should be kept to a minimum. These items should be laundered in hot water with detergent or bleach. After handling, individuals should wash their hands thoroughly in warm water with soap.

What criteria or tests should be used to know for sure that this history is accurate and that the health care worker is immune and does not need vaccine? (1/15/03)

A health/veterinary care worker would have to have written documentation of vaccination within 10 years (from current program date).

Is severe diabetes a contraindication? (1/15/03)

No (but if having severe symptoms, potential vaccinee should discuss this with their health care provider).

Does ACIP recommend that the semi-permeable dressing be removed while vaccinees not at work? (1/15/03)

Semi-permeable dressing is worn in the health care setting. CDC recommends daily site inspections and dressing changes as needed, usually 3-5 days. Vaccinees do not have to come for site checks when not working.

Should vaccinators place a drop on the skin and vaccinate on drop? Seems to be a discrepancy between CDC and package insert. Should we tell people not to refer to the package insert? (1/15/03)

CDC guidance recommends vaccination without putting drop on skin. Don't tell people not to refer to the package insert.

Do vaccinators have to have a documented take before they can begin vaccinating? Do the people that are inspecting vaccination sites and replacing dressings need to be vaccinated? How far in advance does a vaccinator need to be vaccinated prior to administering vaccine? (1/15/03)

If feasible, it is preferred to vaccinate the vaccinators in advance of beginning their work. However, if necessary it is acceptable for vaccinators to be vaccinated immediately prior to beginning their role as a vaccinator. While it is preferred that vaccinators be vaccinated, it is not required (ACIP discussed this issue at its fall meeting and requiring vaccinators to be vaccinated was not adopted.) For those that are regularly changing dressings and handling dressings, vaccination is recommended. For those inspecting the dressings on an infrequent basis, vaccination is not required. The guidance refers to those in a work setting inspecting large numbers of vaccines.

Should people with contraindications inspect sites? (1/15/03)

No.

ACIP's autoimmune recommendation could include people with minimal problems. Are these individuals contraindicated for vaccination? (1/15/03)

ACIP statement refers to "clinically severe". The focus is on severe cases. In a pre-event scenario, err on the side of caution, and when in doubt, exclude person from vaccination, or have them consult with their physician.

Can those people under age 30 be vaccinated? (Based on training checklist, vaccinator trainers are under the impression that no one under 30 should be vaccinated. This is based on an ACIP statement that, when feasible, people that have been previously vaccinated should be vaccinated first. Does this preclude all people under the age of 30 altogether?) (1/15/03)

While it is preferable to start your vaccination program with those people who have been previously vaccinated, it was certainly not intended to exclude those people under the age of 30.

Do 'Autoimmune' diseases include asplenia or stem cell transplant patients? (1/15/03)

Asplenia: This depends on the current state of the patient's recovery and treatment, and the reason for spleen removal. If no severe conditions or side effects are present, than this condition is not inherently a contraindication.

Stem cell transplants: Persons with hematopoietic stem cell transplants are contraindicated if <24 months post-transplant or >24 months post-transplant but who have graft-versus-host disease or disease relapse. [Refer to the Vaccina (Smallpox) Vaccine (6-22-2001) ACIP Recommendations.]

What specific information should public health tell hospitals about the military vaccination program for reservists? (1/15/03)

The local health department should tell the area hospitals that patients presenting with adverse events after vaccinations are a possibility. If this situation occurs, the hospital should treat the person and contact the military for billing and CDC website for guidance.