

## Vaccine Updates

- The nation-wide shortage of Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) containing vaccines continues. With the exception of high-risk children, dose 4 of the Hib vaccine schedule must be deferred. This is true for ActHib® as well as Pentacel® (DTaP-IPV/Hib). Keep a recall list of patient names and date of birth to facilitate notification of affected patients when supply improves.
- Fewer shots! The combination DTaP-IPV vaccine, Kinrix™ is available to VFC providers. This vaccine is licensed only for DTaP dose 5 and IPV dose 4 and recommended between 4 and 6 years of age. These doses are required prior to kindergarten entry. Most practices will no longer need a multidose vial of polio vaccine since all polio doses are now available as part of a combination product. Most practices will order only about half their prior need for DTaP Infanrix®, since it is indicated only for dose 4, between 12 and 18 months of age. There may be practices with too few pediatric patients to support carrying all vaccine product types available. Costly expiration of vaccines and the need to transport products to other sites should be avoided.
- In an effort to reduce the number of doses needed to complete the rotavirus vaccine series, as well as reduce cost, practices will be transitioned from Rotateq® (3 doses) vaccine to Rotarix® (2 doses) vaccine. If an infant received Rotateq® as any dose in the series, or if the vaccine product was unknown, a 3 dose series should be completed using Rotateq®, unless that product is not available. As soon as Rotarix® is available in your practice, all 2 month olds should receive that product and complete the 2 doses series using Rotarix®. If Rotarix® is not available for dose 2, the infant should complete a 3 dose schedule using Rotateq®.

## Vermont Immunization Coverage Rates are Decreasing

### Vermont Ranking is 48<sup>th</sup> out of 51 in the Nation!

According to the National Immunization Survey (NIS) data for 2007 Vermont coverage rates are not all they could and should be. The NIS data looks at 4 DTaP, 3 Polio, 1 MMR, 3 Hib, 3 hepatitis B and 1 Varicella vaccine by 19-35 months. Rates are assessed and updated every 6 months. Our coverage rate for this series of immunizations has gone down from 75.2% a year ago, to our current rate of 66.5%. This decrease is most likely due to multiple factors. If we compare each immunization rate separately, we find that the rates for 4 DTaP, 3 Polio, 1 MMR, 3 Hepatitis B, and 1 Varicella immunization all have decreased in the past year. Immunization coverage for 3 Hib vaccinations have held steady, with rates of 94.2% and 94.9% respectively. We need to work on increasing these coverage rates! The VDH Immunization Program is conducting coverage assessments at practices throughout Vermont. These visits help all of us to identify ways in which we can increase immunization coverage rates. If you are interested in assessing the rates in your practice, please let us or your local VDH office know. Use of alternative immunization schedules has been identified as having an adverse affect on immunization coverage rates. . . Continued on back

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## Immunization Schedules

Every year more and more parents are requesting that providers follow alternative immunization schedules. With the advent of various alternative schedules and the variety of information given false equivalency by the media and on the internet, the task of educating parents about the importance of immunizations and following the ACIP recommended schedule has become more complex. Consequently, we want to highlight some resources that are available to educate parents on the importance vaccines and of following the ACIP immunization schedule. In the Fall of 2008, the Immunization Action Coalition published an article called "Clear Answers & Smart Advice About Your Baby's Shots" by Dr. Ari Brown. This article touches on several parental concerns around immunizations such as autism, are vaccines necessary, are we giving too many vaccines too soon, and what about delaying immunizations or using alternative immunization schedules. It is written for parents who have questions regarding vaccinations and provides clear concise answers that give factual information without being too over whelming. The January 2009 edition of Pediatrics published an article called "The Problem with Dr Bob's Alternative Vaccine Schedule" by Paul Offit & Charlotte Moser. This article reviews and discusses the shortcomings of Dr. Robert Sears' suggested alternative vaccine schedule. These are two of many excellent articles that touch upon this important topic. Copies of these two articles and many more can be found at [www.immunize.org/journalarticles](http://www.immunize.org/journalarticles) or by contacting your local VDH office.

### Practices Visited in 2008 with Excellence in Vaccination Coverage

80 percent or more of the 2 year old children up to date for 4:3:1:3:3:1 by 24 months of age



Dr. Angela Wingate	Orleans Medical Center
Mount Anthony Primary Care	Pediatric Associates - Rutland
Northshire Medical Center	Danville Health Center
Brattleboro Primary Care	St. Johnsbury Pediatrics - NVRH
Timberlane Pediatrics – Appletree Bay	Cornerstone Pediatrics
University Pediatrics in Williston	Bethel Health Center
Middlebury Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine	Ottauquechee Health Center
Morrisville Family Healthcare	Family Practice of Newport
Community Medical Associates	Island Pond Health Center

**Congratulations to those practices listed above!**