



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

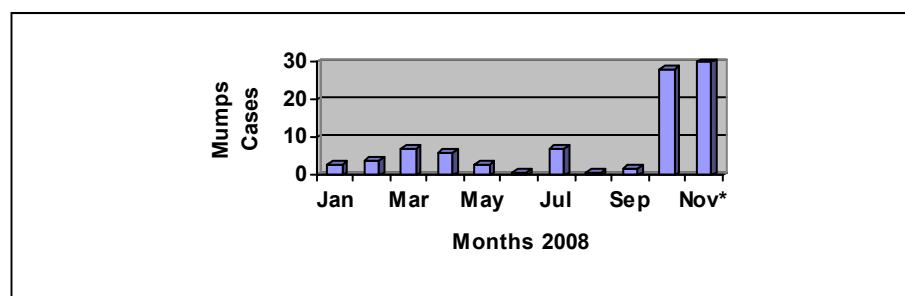
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Mumps Outbreaks in Third Level Colleges

This autumn has again seen outbreaks of mumps in our third level colleges. The last major outbreaks were three years ago, in 2005. Up to mid-November, we have had 92 cases of mumps notified in Cork and Kerry, 58 in October and November alone, see Figure 1.

Figure 1. Mumps Cases, Cork & Kerry, 2008



*up to mid-November

The majority (75%) of cases have been in the age group 15 and 24 years, most of whom were attending a third level college, see Figure 2. University College Cork and Cork Institute of Technology have been particularly affected.

Figure 2. Mumps cases by age, Cork & Kerry, 2008 (up to mid-November)



We are aware that many in the 15-24 year age group have received only one or no MMR vaccine. The national recommendation is that college students under 25 years of age, who have not had 2 doses of MMR should be given one dose. GPs will be paid the agreed rate for MMR immunisation during this outbreak. Immunisation return claim forms can be forwarded as usual to the local immunisation office and it would be helpful if GPs marked the form with an "O" for outbreak in the top left hand corner.

Which Pneumococcal Vaccine for What Ages?

Since the introduction of the new pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) in the childhood immunisation programme, GPs surgeries now have 2 different pneumococcal vaccines in their fridges. It is important to be clear on the recommendations for the use of these two vaccines.

Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV7) – Prevenar

This is the vaccine for use in children. It contains antigens from the 7 most common pneumococcal serotypes. It is only licensed for use from 2 months of age to 5 years of age (i.e. up to the fifth birthday). This vaccine should not be used in adults or in children aged 5 years and over.

Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Vaccine (PPV23) – Pneumovax II

This is the vaccine available for many years for use in adults. It contains more antigen serotypes (23) than the PCV7. It is licensed for use in adults and for children from 2 years of age. It is not licensed for use in children under 2 years due to a suboptimal response and also safety is not established in that age group. Children at increased risk from pneumococcal disease are recommended to have PPV23 from age 2 years, in addition to the PCV7. For full details on definitions of at risk children and the PPV23 schedule recommended for them please see Chapter 12 of the Immunisation Guidelines for Ireland, 2008.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the advice when a woman has had 2 documented doses of Rubella or MMR vaccine and rubella serology is still negative?

A: A negative rubella serology test (i.e. reported as rubella non immune) could be due to an insensitive test or a true vaccine failure, as even with 2 vaccine doses vaccine failure may occur rarely. The general recommendation would be to give a third MMR but there is no advantage in giving more than three doses.

The woman should be told that she may still be immune, despite the negative serology. However, she cannot assume that she is immune, as she may be a case of vaccine failure.

Q: Can MMR, Hib and PCV be given at the same time?

A: This situation may arise when a child, over 12 months, comes for PCV but is also due MMR and Hib booster. There should be no problem giving these 3 vaccines together. However, we do not yet have sufficient evidence available to confirm that there is no possibility of interactions between the 3 vaccines. The problem is not an increase in side effects but that there may be interference with response and you may get a suboptimal response to one or more components. The general advice is that you separate them as per the schedule. However, if there is concern that the child may not return for an additional visit, the 3 vaccines can be given at the one visit.

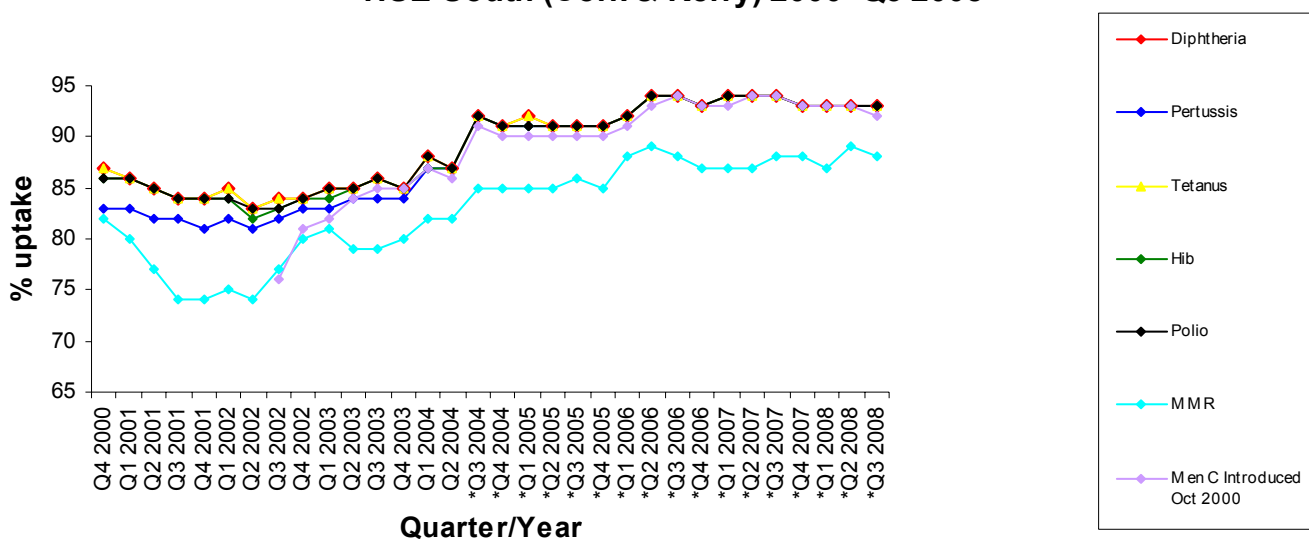
Q: Have the recommendations for Hib vaccine changed?

A: Yes. Hib vaccine was previously recommended up to 4 years of age. The New Immunisation Guidelines for Ireland, 2008 now recommend that all children aged 1-10 years who have *never* received Hib vaccine should be given 1 dose. This should only be relevant for children coming into Ireland from a country that does not have a Hib vaccine programme, as children living in Ireland should already have had Hib vaccine (introduced in Ireland in 1992).

Immunisation Uptake: Could do Better!

The graph below shows our immunisation uptake at 24 months for the last 8 years. While the uptake has increased over the years we seem to have hit an impasse, with no increase over the last 2 years. Our most recent figures for Quarter 3, 2008 show an uptake of 93% for DTaP/IPV/Hib and Men C and 88% for MMR. Just a little extra effort from us all could see us reach the mythical 95% target!

% Uptake of primary immunisations at 24 months by quarter in HSE-South (Cork & Kerry) 2000- Q3 2008



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Correction for Newsletter dated September 2008
Contact Details for further information for
National Immunisation Office should have read:
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