



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Volume 13, Issue 4

December 2016

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH, HSE SOUTH
(CORK & KERRY)

IMMUNISATION FOCUS

National Measles Outbreak Over

Forty cases of measles occurred in Ireland during the recent outbreak, with cases occurring from April to August. Twenty seven of the cases were notified in Cork and Kerry. The primary case contracted measles while on holiday in Europe and became ill on return to Kerry. Transmission occurred in many settings including household, community, hospital and in-flight.

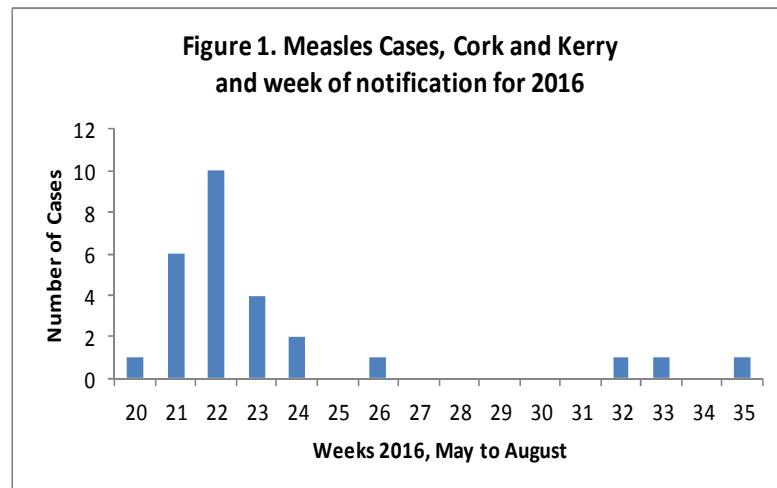
Cork and Kerry—27 cases:

21/27 cases were in children, all unvaccinated (included 4 aged under 12 months—too young to have received MMR).

6/27 cases were in adults, 3 unvaccinated and vaccination status unknown for 3.

11/27 were hospitalised.

4/27 cases had nosocomial infection (were infected in hospital).



The outbreak again highlights the risk of transmission when measles is imported into Ireland. In this outbreak all the Cork & Kerry child cases were unvaccinated. MMR is the only way to protect against measles.

FAQ: Can MMR Vaccine be given to someone with egg allergy?

Yes, MMR can be given to someone with egg allergy. The current Immunisation Guidelines for Ireland (<http://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/hcpinfo/guidelines/chapter12.pdf>) advise that allergy to egg, including anaphylaxis following egg is NOT a contraindication to MMR vaccination.

“Currently-used measles, mumps and rubella vaccines do not contain significant amounts of egg cross-reacting proteins and recent data suggest that anaphylaxis following MMR is not associated with hypersensitivity to egg antigens but to other vaccine components (Gelatin or Neomycin).”

If GPs are concerned about egg allergy in a particular child the Paediatric Immunisation Nurse in Cork University Hospital, Stephanie Mulcair (086-7872178) or Professor Jonathan Hourihane (contactable through the CUH switchboard 021-4922000) can be contacted for advice.

It is very important that MMR vaccination is not delayed unnecessarily.

Immunisation Guidelines for Ireland Updated September 2016

Several chapters of the Immunisation Guidelines for Ireland were recently updated. The updated guidelines are available on the National Immunisation Office website at <http://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/hcpinfo/guidelines/>

Among the chapters updated are the Meningococcal and Rotavirus chapters, which now reflect the new immunisation schedule, with the addition of MenB and Rotavirus vaccines.

GP Meningitis Packs: Remember to check your packs

When a case of meningococcal disease is suspected early treatment with benzylpenicillin may be life-saving. It is recommended that GPs carry supplies of this drug in an emergency bag.

We have previously supplied all GPs in Cork and Kerry with a 'meningitis pack' containing benzylpenicillin, water for injection, syringe, needles, swabs and dosage information. We recently informed GPs that the benzylpenicillin in some of these packs had an expiry date of the end of October 2016. We asked GPs to check their 'meningitis pack' and, if the benzylpenicillin was about to go out of date, to contact this office for a replacement pack. Quite a number of GP surgeries did contact us and we have sent out replacement packs.

If you have not already checked your 'meningitis pack' please do so and contact this office by e-mail (angela.murphy@hse.ie) or phone (021-4927603) if you require a replacement pack.

Pertussis vaccination in Pregnancy: Now recommended at 16-36 weeks gestation

The National Immunisation Advisory Committee has recently updated the advice on pertussis vaccination for pregnant women. Previously, the recommended time for Tdap vaccination in pregnancy was from 27-36 weeks gestation.

The update advice now is -

"Pregnant women should be offered Tdap as early as possible after 16 weeks and up to 36 weeks gestation in each pregnancy, to protect themselves and their infant.

Tdap can be given at any time in pregnancy after 36 weeks gestation although it may be less effective in providing passive protection to the infant".

The reason for the change is that additional studies have shown that giving the vaccine earlier in pregnancy allows for greater transfer of antibodies to the foetus. It also provides some protection for babies born <28 weeks gestation, who are at particular risk of severe infection.

So far this year 34 cases of pertussis have been notified in Cork and Kerry, compared to 14 for all of 2015. Of the 34 cases 14 were in children under 6 months of age. Information on the mother's vaccination in pregnancy was available for 12 cases and none of the mothers had received pertussis vaccine. It is important that mothers are provided with information regarding the recommendation for pertussis vaccination in pregnancy.

HPV Vaccine – Drop in Uptake

Unfounded concerns regarding the HPV vaccine have led to a significant drop in uptake of the vaccine. Although this vaccine is delivered by HSE medical and nursing staff in a schools programme, parents may ask their GP or practice nurse for advice or information. It is important that parents are provided with accurate, evidence-based information. The National Immunisation Office website is the best source of information for Ireland. HPV information for healthcare professionals is available at:

<http://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/hcpinfo/OtherVaccines/hpv/hpv.html>

HPV information for the general public is available at:

<http://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/pubinfo/schoolprog/HPV/>

Every year more than 90 women will die of cervical cancer in Ireland. The HPV vaccine protects women from seven out of ten cervical cancers which are caused by HPV. Therefore, most cervical cancers can be prevented by the vaccine. Tragically some of the girls who have not taken the vaccine will go on to develop a cervical cancer, which could have been prevented.

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