



October 14, 2014

Dear Health Care Provider:

Re: Two dose schedule for school based HPV vaccine (Gardasil®) program

I am writing to inform you that on October 20, 2014, British Columbia will be moving from a **three dose** to a **two dose** HPV vaccine schedule for healthy girls aged under 15 years old when commencing a series. Currently, the schedule for girls in BC consists of two doses in grade 6 followed by a third dose in grade 9. Recently, the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) reviewed data for two-dose schedules and concluded that a third dose is not required for protection in younger girls. Hence, the dose in grade 9 can be discontinued. A three dose series is still recommended for those starting a series at age 15 and over.

Background

Based on results of a Canadian immunogenicity trial (Dobson, 2013), the Communicable Disease Policy Advisory Committee of British Columbia has contemplated a 2 dose HPV vaccine schedule since the implementation of the program in September 2008. There is now an accumulation of international evidence in support of a two dose quadrivalent HPV vaccine schedule. Specifically, available immunogenicity and efficacy data indicate that protection from two doses of HPV vaccine given at least six months apart is non-inferior to three doses.

Several immunization expert advisory committees around the world now recommend use of the 2 dose schedule, including the World Health Organization and the European Medicines Agency. Several countries such as the United Kingdom, Austria, Switzerland and the Netherlands have moved to a two dose HPV vaccination schedule for adolescent girls. On October 1, 2014, the Canadian National Advisory Committee on Immunization recommended a two-dose quadrivalent HPV vaccine (Gardasil) series for girls 9-14 years of age, and publication of the updated statement is anticipated following Assistant Deputy Minister approval. Based on these research studies, excellent effectiveness profile of the vaccine, robust immune response to two doses, and established global and national recommendations, the provincial Communicable Disease Advisory Committee recommended the two dose schedule for British Columbia. The updated NACI statement should be available by end of 2014.

Effective **October 20, 2014** public health clinics in schools will be providing two doses of the quadrivalent HPV vaccine six months apart to grade 6 girls. Parents and the girls will be informed of this schedule change in writing. For any questions regarding the schedule change for specific patients, please contact your local Medical Health Officer.

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As a practitioner, you play an important role in the success of the provincial HPV vaccine program. A strong recommendation from a trusted health care provider is a leading predictor of HPV vaccine uptake in British Columbia. Approximately one third of all eligible girls currently remain unprotected against HPV. We would encourage you to use this opportunity of the schedule change to remind parents about:

- The excellent safety record of HPV vaccines
- The excellent effectiveness of this vaccine
- The importance of immunizing at a young age to prevent infections that begin to occur as girls progress through adolescence

A simple statement from you, such as *'The HPV vaccine is a highly effective and safe vaccine. I strongly recommend you have your daughter vaccinated'* has an important positive effect on HPV vaccine uptake.

For further information, please see:

<http://www.immunizebc.ca/healthcare-professionals/qas-and-supporting-documents>

Sincerely,



P.R.W. Kendall
OBC, MBBS, MHSc, FRCPC
Provincial Health Officer

REFERENCES:

Dobson SR, McNeil S, Dionne M, Dawar M, Ogilvie G, Krajden M, Sauvageau C, Scheifele DW, Kollmann TR, Halperin SA, Langley JM, Bettinger JA, Singer J, Money D, Miller D, Naus M, Marra F, Young E. Immunogenicity of 2 doses of HPV vaccine in younger adolescents vs 3 doses in young women: a randomized clinical trial. JAMA. 2013 May 1;309(17):1793-802.
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23632723>

European Medicines Agency recommendation:

http://www.ema.europa.eu/ema/index.jsp?curl=pages/medicines/human/medicines/000703/human_med_000805.jsp

National Advisory Committee on Immunization. Update on the recommended HPV vaccine immunization schedule. Draft September 26, 2014; publication anticipated late November/ early December 2014.

World Health Organization – Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization recommendation:

http://www.who.int/immunization/sage/meetings/2014/april/report_summary_april_2014/en/