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ACIP Recommendations

Use of a Reduced (4-Dose) Vaccine Schedule for Postexposure Prophylaxis to Prevent Human Rabies

Summary

This report summarizes new recommendation and updates previous recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) for postexposure prophylaxis (PEP) to prevent human rabies (CDC. Human rabies prevention---United States, 2008: recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. MMWR 2008;57[No. RR-3]). Previously, ACIP recommended a 5-dose rabies vaccination regimen with human diploid cell vaccine (HDCV) or purified chick embryo cell vaccine (PCECV). These new recommendations reduce the number of vaccine doses to four. The reduction in doses recommended for PEP was based in part on evidence from rabies virus pathogenesis data, experimental animal work, clinical studies, and epidemiologic surveillance. These studies indicated that 4 vaccine doses in combination with rabies immune globulin (RIG) elicited adequate immune responses and that a fifth dose of vaccine did not contribute to more favorable outcomes. For persons previously unvaccinated with rabies vaccine, the reduced regimen of 4 1-mL doses of HDCV or PCECV should be administered intramuscularly. The first dose of the 4-dose course should be administered as soon as possible after exposure (day 0). Additional doses then should be administered on days 3, 7, and 14 after the first vaccination. ACIP recommendations for the use of RIG remain unchanged. For persons who previously received a complete vaccination series (pre- or postexposure prophylaxis) with a cell-culture vaccine or who previously had a documented adequate rabies virus-neutralizing antibody titer following vaccination with noncell-culture vaccine, the recommendation for a 2-dose PEP vaccination series has not changed. Similarly, the number of doses recommended for persons with altered immunocompetence has not changed; for such persons, PEP should continue to comprise a 5-dose vaccination regimen with 1 dose of RIG. Recommendations for pre-exposure prophylaxis also remain unchanged, with 3 doses of vaccine administered on days 0, 7, and 21 or 28. Prompt rabies PEP combining wound care, infiltration of RIG into and around the wound, and multiple doses of rabies cell-culture vaccine continue to be highly effective in preventing human rabies.

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Human Rabies Prevention --- United States, 2008 Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices

Summary

These recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) update the previous recommendations on human rabies prevention (CDC. Human rabies prevention--United States, 1999: recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. MMWR 1999;48 [No. RR-1]) and reflect the status of rabies and antirabies biologics in the United States. This statement:

1. provides updated information on human and animal rabies epidemiology;
2. summarizes the evidence regarding the effectiveness/efficacy, immunogenicity, and safety of rabies biologics;
3. presents new information on the cost-effectiveness of rabies postexposure prophylaxis;
4. presents recommendations for rabies postexposure and pre-exposure prophylaxis;
5. presents information regarding treatment considerations for human rabies patients.

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