

Routine Use of Pertussis Vaccine in Adults

08/15/2016

Pertussis has long been regarded as a disease effectively prevented by the childhood vaccine series. However, it is now recognized that there is gradual loss of immunity beginning about 5 to 10 years after vaccination, and over the past 20 years reported cases of pertussis have increased. In order to reduce the likelihood of pertussis-infected health care workers transmitting the illness to unprotected vulnerable infants, the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM) approved position statements in 2006 and 2013 that encouraged pertussis vaccination of health care workers with direct patient contact.

With concern that there has been too little attention given to routine pertussis vaccination in adults, ACOEM supports the importance of Tetanus Diphtheria Acellular Pertussis (Tdap) vaccination as a part of sound preventive medical care. Protocols should be consistent with current recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).

Current CDC/ACIP recommendations for the general population, as well as those for pregnant women and adults over 65, are available at <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/acip-recs/vacc-specific/tdap-td.html>. This statement revised the 2013 statement.

This document was prepared under the auspices of the Council of Scientific Advisors, reviewed by the Committee on Policy, Procedures and Public Positions, and approved by the ACOEM Board of Directors on July 30, 2016. ACOEM requires all substantive contributors to its documents to disclose any potential competing interests, which are carefully considered. ACOEM emphasizes that the judgments expressed herein represent the best available evidence at the time of publication and shall be considered the position of ACOEM and not the individual opinions of contributing authors.