Vaccine News

Booster shot for whooping cough

Whooping cough (pertussis) cases are on the rise in both adolescents and adults. People immunized during childhood were thought to have life-long protection, but it is now apparent that the immunity provided by the vaccine is only good for about 10 years.

Although whooping cough is more severe in infants, it causes a prolonged cough in adolescents and adults and may last from two or three months to sometimes eight or nine months. A highly contagious disease, pertussis can be easily transmitted by coughing and sneezing.

A new combined vaccine booster for tetanus-diptheria-pertussis for adults, recently approved by the FDA, is now available. Check with your physician and/or pulmonologist for advice about receiving the shot.

Influenza vaccine advised for children with neuromuscular conditions

A recent study by researchers at the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) found that children with neurological and neuromuscular conditions were at highest risk of respiratory failure due to influenza. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices added these conditions to the list of chronic conditions warranting an annual flu vaccination.

Ron Keren, MD, MPH, CHOP pediatrician, says, “Children with neurological and neuromuscular disease often have diminished pulmonary function and ability to handle secretions at baseline, and therefore are more vulnerable to respiratory complications of influenza.” The same statement can apply to adults with these conditions who are also advised to obtain an annual influenza vaccination.