

Transcript Details

This is a transcript of an educational program. Details about the program and additional media formats for the program are accessible by visiting: <https://reachmd.com/programs/vaccination/closing-meningococcal-protection-gaps-the-case-for-combination-vaccines/37108/>

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Closing Meningococcal Protection Gaps: The Case for Combination Vaccines

Announcer:

Welcome to *VacciNation* on ReachMD. On this episode, we'll hear from Dr. Ruth Carrico, who will discuss how we can prevent meningococcal disease in adolescents and young adults through vaccination. Dr. Carrico is a family nurse practitioner based in Louisville, Kentucky; adjunct professor in the Division of Infectious Diseases at the University of Louisville School of Medicine; and Senior Partner and Co-Owner of Carrico and Ramirez, a clinical practice and consulting company. Here she is now.

Dr. Carrico:

Looking at data from a 2022 survey, the CDC provides us with some info that 89 percent of adolescents—those that are 13 to 17 years of age—had received one or more dose of the baseline meningococcal vaccine, and that is a vaccine that protects against four of those serogroups. Now, we have about five major serogroups of meningococcal disease that we want to provide protection against. We have the ACWY. Those are our four longstanding serogroups. And we have serogroup B. And this is important for our healthcare providers to remember because we have a quadrivalent vaccine that protects against those four groups—ACWY—and then we have a second meningococcal B vaccine that protects against that singular serogroup B. So when we look at how well we've done with vaccination, 89 percent of those adolescents had received one or more dose of that ACWY vaccine, but only 61 percent of those 17 years of age and older had received two or more doses of that vaccine. Twenty-nine percent had received only one of the recommended meningococcal B vaccine groups. So this means then that we have children and young adults who have not received the benefit of full protection against those serogroups.

So when we think about these age groups, we have our adolescents who are beginning to wean themselves away from their routine medical care. They're becoming a little bit more independent. They are not in the provider's office as frequently as they are when they are younger. So now, we may only see them once or twice a year or sometimes not at all, so if they don't come in for a healthcare visit, they may not receive the healthcare provider's strong recommendation for vaccination.

So I think now we have some great opportunities to take advantage of where we are with newer vaccines to help address this. So as I've mentioned, we had two vaccines: the traditional ACWY and then the men B vaccine. That means that the young adult or the adolescent had to go to a healthcare provider, have someone talk with them about both of these vaccines, have both of these vaccines available for them, and then be able to administer them correctly, you know, timing, spaced correctly, and all of the components about appropriate vaccination. But now that we have pentavalent vaccines that have all five of these important serogroups—A, C, W, Y and B—in the same vaccine, we've taken not only the guesswork out of it but the availability and having the vaccine on hand so that we can address those needs much more readily. If your patients are like mine, my patients generally ask me two questions, and that is, is this vaccine right for me? That is, will it help me? and then will this vaccine hurt me? So it helps me get all of that together now in my mind so I can come up with a vaccine plan that makes it easy. I can maybe minimize the number of injections. I can organize this vaccination plan much more effectively with this complete combination vaccine, and then ultimately do what's right for my patient. And that is to give them the best information so they can make the best decisions about their health care and then be a partner. And I've got the vaccine readily available; I can take care of it at the time we have those discussions.

Announcer:

That was Dr. Ruth Carrico talking about the role of vaccination in preventing meningococcal disease in adolescents and young adults. To access this and other episodes in our series, visit *VacciNation* on ReachMD.com, where you can Be Part of the Knowledge. Thanks for listening!