A Reminder: Meningococcal Vaccine

The U.S. Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices has recommended administration of the quadrivalent conjugated polysaccharide meningococcal vaccine (Menactra – Sanofi Pasteur) to all persons 11 to 18 years old, particularly those entering high school and college freshmen living in dormitories. The peak incidence of meningococcal disease, after early childhood, occurs in the 15-19 year-old age group. The conjugate vaccine is more immunogenic than the meningococcal capsular polysaccharide vaccine (Menomune – Sanofi Pasteur).

ADVERSE EFFECTS — The most common adverse reactions with the conjugate vaccine have been headache, fatigue and malaise, in addition to pain, redness and induration at the injection site. Guillain-Barré syndrome has occurred rarely.

CONCLUSION — Previously unvaccinated children starting high school or going away to college this fall should receive a single dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine (Menactra).
