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**Measles Immunization - New Recommendations
from American Academy of Pediatrics Issued October 21, 1976**

“Live, attenuated measles virus vaccine was licensed for use in the United States in 1963. During the past 13 years, more than 80 million children have been immunized. Before measles vaccine was available major epidemics occurred at 2 or 3 years intervals in most communities, and approximately 500,000 cases of the disease were reported in the country each year.

The extensive use of measles vaccine has had a profound effect on the epidemiology of the disease in the United States. The number of reported cases has declined to levels of approximately 35,000 annually - a decrease of more than 90 percent. In addition, there has been a corresponding decrease in the number of reported cases of post-measles encephalitis, and the major nation-wide epidemics of the pre-vaccine eras have not occurred.

In spite of these encouraging trends, periodic outbreaks of measles have occurred in various groups of children and adolescents during the past 3 or more years. The two major groups include: (1) those who were never immunized - for example, in 1975, 35 percent of children 1-4 years of age (about 5 million children) did not receive vaccine; and (2) those few who were immunized but the vaccine was not successful.

At its meeting on Sunday, October 17, 1976, the Committee on Infectious Diseases of the American Academy of Pediatrics reviewed the results of four recent studies indicating that the optimum age for measles immunization is 15 months of age, rather than 12 months of age. The antibody response at 12 months ranged between 80-85 percent; it was more than 95 percent if measles was given after 13 or 14 months of age.

These as yet unpublished studies were conducted by Dr. Anne Yeager and her colleagues in Northern California, by Dr. Richard Krugman and his colleagues in Denver, Colorado, in collaboration with the Bureau of Biologics, by Dr. Edward Saltzman and his colleagues in Hollywood, Florida, in collaboration with Dr. Saul Krugman, and by Dr. Thomas Shope and his colleagues in Detroit, Michigan.

The American Academy of Pediatrics Committee recommends that measles immunization be delayed until 15 months for infants who live in communities where the disease is not prevalent. However, during the course of measles outbreaks, measles vaccine should be given any time after 6 months of age followed by a second inoculation after 15 months of age.”

Commentary: Based on the data presented, the Infectious Disease Section concurs that on a prospective basis, all routine measles immunization should be given on or after 15 months of age. It is not anticipated that any official recommendations will be made for reimmunizing those infants who received measles vaccine between 12 and 15 months of age. Recommendations from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices of the USPHS are expected shortly.

(Reported by: California Morbidity, Weekly Report, October 29, 1976 - No. 42)