A Quick Look at Using Rotavirus (RV) Vaccines

Available Rotavirus Vaccines
- Rotarix® (RV1), GlaxoSmithKline
- RotaTeq® (RV5), Merck
- Both RV vaccines are live, attenuated vaccines

Indications for Use and Schedule
- Number of doses in series depends on RV vaccine used
  - RV1: 2-dose series at 2 months and 4 months
  - RV5: 3-dose series at 2, 4, and 6 months
- Minimum age to start RV vaccine series is 6 weeks
- Maximum age for 1st dose of RV vaccine series is 14 weeks, 6 days
- Maximum age for last dose of RV vaccine series is 8 months, 0 days
- Minimum interval between RV vaccine doses is 4 weeks
- If both RV vaccines are available, continue series with the same product (RV1 or RV5); if not, use the product in stock
- If any dose in RV vaccine series is RV5 or the brand is unknown, give the 3-dose series

Vaccine Administration
- Administer both RV vaccines orally (PO)
- RV1 dosage is 1.0 mL; needs to be reconstituted, see Further Points below
- RV5 dosage is 2.0 mL; is premixed
- Can be given with other vaccines at the same visit
- May give before or after injectable vaccines
- Do not add to other liquids or food; may give food/fluids before or after RV vaccine
- Do not repeat doses that are regurgitated or spit up; count the dose and give the next dose as scheduled
- Dispose vaccine vial, syringe, tube, and cap in biologic waste container

Storage and Handling
- Store vaccine in the refrigerator at 36°F to 46°F (2°C to 8°C)
- Do not freeze
- Pharmaceutical-grade (purpose-built) units are preferred for vaccine storage
- Keep in the original boxes and protect from light

Contraindications
- Severe allergic reaction (e.g., anaphylaxis) after a previous dose of vaccine or to a vaccine component
  - Note: Latex rubber is contained in the RV1 oral applicator. Infants with a severe allergy to latex should not receive RV1. The RV5 dosing tube is latex free.
- History of severe combined immunodeficiency (SCID)
- History of intussusception
- History of uncorrected congenital malformation of the gastrointestinal tract (such as Meckel’s diverticulum) that predisposes the infant to intussusception (RV1 only)

Precautions
- Moderate or severe illness with or without fever
- Altered immunocompetence other than SCID (e.g., blood dyscrasias, leukemia, HIV, on immunosuppressive therapy including high-dose systemic corticosteroids, primary and acquired)
- Chronic gastrointestinal disease
- Spina bifida or bladder extrophy (RV1 only)
  - Infants with spina bifida or bladder extrophy are at high risk for acquiring latex allergy; providers may want to consider administering RV5 to these infants if it’s available
  - Refer to the 2009 MMWR (see footnote on page 2) for more information
- Moms who are HIV/AIDS positive and the infant’s HIV status is unknown (RV5 only)
Publicly purchased RV vaccine can be administered to eligible children 6 weeks through 8 months of age through the Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program. Eligible children include those who are uninsured, underinsured, Medicaid eligible, Native American, or Alaskan Natives. Contact your local health department for more information.

For additional information: MMWRs: “Prevention of Rotavirus Gastroenteritis Among Infants and Children: Recommendations of the ACIP” (February 6, 2009); “Addition of Severe Combined Immunodeficiency as a Contraindication for Administration of Rotavirus Vaccine” (June 11, 2010); and “Addition of History of Intussusception as a Contraindication for Rotavirus Vaccination” (October 21, 2011) at www.cdc.gov/vaccines.