



October 21, 2009

Dear Health Care Provider:

**Monovalent vaccines no longer available for measles, mumps, rubella**

Based on input from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), professional societies, scientific leaders, and customers, Merck has decided not to resume production of ATTENUVAX® (Measles Virus Vaccine Live), MUMPSVAX® (Mumps Virus Vaccine Live), and MERUVAX®<sub>II</sub> (Rubella Virus Vaccine Live). This science-based decision will support vaccination of the largest group of appropriate individuals.

We will continue to focus necessary resources to ensure that we can help meet current and future global public health needs for our combination measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine, M-M-R®<sub>II</sub> (Measles, Mumps, and Rubella Virus Vaccine Live).

**Background and rationale**

In 2008, Merck stopped making the 3 monovalent vaccines due to manufacturing constraints and had announced plans to resume production only if sufficient manufacturing resources were available to do so without compromising supplies of M-M-R®<sub>II</sub>.

The combination vaccine M-M-R®<sub>II</sub> is recommended by the ACIP, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), and is preferred over the monovalent vaccines because it eliminates the need for 3 separate injections and reduces the chance of delays in helping protect against any of these potentially serious diseases.<sup>1-3</sup>

There is no medical reason to administer the measles, mumps, and rubella antigens separately, and ACIP guidelines do not support their use.<sup>1</sup>

M-M-R®<sub>II</sub> is indicated for simultaneous vaccination against measles, mumps, and rubella in individuals 12 months of age or older. M-M-R®<sub>II</sub> should be given 1 month before or after administration of other live viral vaccines.

The ACIP recommends routine administration of the first dose of M-M-R®<sub>II</sub> at 12 to 15 months of age and routine administration of the second dose of M-M-R®<sub>II</sub> at 4 to 6 years of age.

**Select Safety Information**

M-M-R®<sub>II</sub> is contraindicated in certain individuals, including those with: a history of hypersensitivity to any component of the vaccine, including gelatin; a history of anaphylactic or anaphylactoid reaction to neomycin; blood dyscrasias, leukemia, lymphomas of any type, or other malignant neoplasms affecting the bone marrow or lymphatic systems; an immunodeficient condition or receiving immunosuppressive therapy; an active febrile illness; or those who are pregnant.

The following adverse reactions have been reported with M-M-R®<sub>II</sub> without regard to causality: fever, headache, dizziness, rash, injection-site reactions, febrile convulsions, anaphylaxis and anaphylactoid reactions, arthritis, and thrombocytopenia.

### Select Safety Information (cont)

Due caution should be employed in administration of M-M-R<sup>®</sup><sub>II</sub> (Measles, Mumps, and Rubella Virus Vaccine Live) to persons with a history of cerebral injury, individual or family histories of convulsions, or any other condition in which stress due to fever should be avoided.

As for any vaccine, vaccination with M-M-R<sup>®</sup><sub>II</sub> may not result in protection in 100% of vaccinees.

### Suggested resources

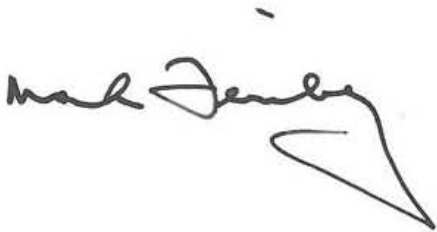
Consumers and patients may come to you with questions or concerns. Some places to look for resources include: AAP – <http://www.aap.org> (Immunizations section); AAFP – <http://www.aafp.org>; or CDC – <http://www.cdc.gov>.

If you have questions, please contact the Merck National Service Center at 1-800-672-6372 Monday through Friday from 8 AM to 7 PM.

**Before administering M-M-R<sup>®</sup><sub>II</sub>, please read the accompanying [Prescribing Information](#).** For additional copies of the [Prescribing Information](#), call 1-800-672-6372, visit [MerckVaccines.com](http://MerckVaccines.com)<sup>®</sup>, or contact your Merck representative.

Thank you for your commitment to patient care and public health and for your understanding in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Feinberg". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Mark Feinberg, MD, PhD, FACP

**References:** 1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). General recommendations on immunization: recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). *MMWR Recomm Reps.* 2006;55(RR-15):1–48. 2. American Academy of Pediatrics. Combination vaccines for childhood immunization: recommendations for the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP). *Pediatrics.* 1999;103(5):1064–1074. 3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Recommended Immunization Schedule for Persons Aged 0 Through 6 Years—United States, 2009. [http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/schedules/downloads/child/2009/09\\_0-6yrs\\_schedule\\_bw.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/schedules/downloads/child/2009/09_0-6yrs_schedule_bw.pdf). Accessed October 19, 2009.