The Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH)
Health Alert Network (HAN)
Alabama Emergency Response Technology (ALERT)
April 15, 2021

ACIP Requests Continued Pause on Use of J & J Vaccine

On Tuesday, April 13, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) issued a joint statement on the Johnson and Johnson COVID-19 vaccine recommending a hold be placed on use of the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine until the findings of a review of cases was completed by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) convened on April 14, 2021. ACIP requested continuation of the pause for another week to allow for a review of additional information and to look for additional cases.

Clinicians are encouraged to be aware of and vigilant looking for the rare but serious side effects of central venous sinus thrombosis **with** thrombocytopenia. Any person who has been vaccinated in the past 2 weeks using the J & J vaccine who presents with symptoms including severe headache, backache, new neurologic symptoms, severe abdominal pain, shortness of breath, leg swelling, petechiae (tiny red spots on the skin), or new or easy bruising should be thoroughly evaluated. Please maintain a high index of suspicion and immediately report through VAERS. For more information on how to report visit VAERS

Recommendations For Clinicians

1. Pause the use of the J&J COVID-19 vaccine until the ACIP is able to further review these CVST cases in the context of thrombocytopenia and assess their potential significance.
2. Maintain a high index of suspicion for symptoms that might represent serious thrombotic events or thrombocytopenia in patients who have recently received the J&J COVID-19 vaccine, including severe headache, backache, new neurologic symptoms, severe abdominal pain, shortness of breath, leg swelling, petechiae (tiny red spots on the skin), or new or easy bruising. Obtain platelet counts and screen for evidence of immune thrombotic thrombocytopenia.
3. In patients with a thrombotic event and thrombocytopenia after the J&J COVID-19 vaccine, evaluate initially with a screening PF4 enzyme-linked immunosorbent (ELISA) assay as would be performed for autoimmune HIT. Consultation with a hematologist is strongly recommended.
4. Do not treat patients with thrombotic events and thrombocytopenia following receipt of J&J COVID-19 vaccine with heparin, unless HIT testing is negative.
5. If HIT testing is positive or unable to be performed in patient with thrombotic events and thrombocytopenia following receipt of J&J COVID-19 vaccine, non-heparin anticoagulants and high-dose intravenous immune globulin should be strongly considered.

Report adverse events to VAERS, including serious and life-threatening adverse events and deaths in patients following receipt of COVID-19 vaccines as required under the Emergency Use Authorizations for COVID-19 vaccines.

IMPORTANT CDC COCA CALL, TODAY, APRIL 15 at 1:00pm CT

CDC COCA Call: Johnson & Johnson/Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine and Cerebral Venous Sinus Thrombosis with Thrombocytopenia – Update for Clinicians on Early Detection and Treatment [Attachment, Link]

CDC Clinician Outreach and Community Activity (COCA) will host a webinar **tomorrow**, Thursday, **April 15** at **2:00 pm EDT** to present the latest evidence on cerebral venous sinus thrombosis (CVST) with thrombocytopenia associated with the administration of the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine. Speakers will discuss what is known about CVST, the importance of early detection, and updated vaccine recommendations.

Call information is below:
Weblink:
https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1614336614?pwd=ZVhQUHoyaG4zVFdua2czcE9EU20wUT09
Telephone: (669) 254 5252 or (646) 828 7666
Webinar ID: 161 433 6614
Passcode: 160026
Post-Event Recording: https://emergency.cdc.gov/coca/calls/2021/callinfo_041521.asp

For the full CDC HAN ALERT from April 13, please visit
https://emergency.cdc.gov/han/2021/han00442.asp