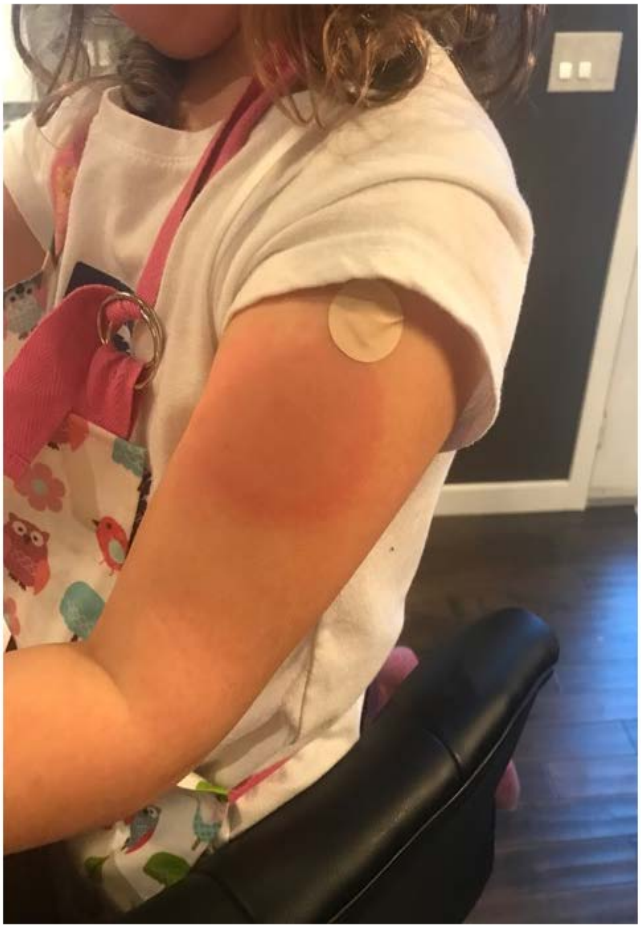
medSask

HOT TOPIC

Should this influenza vaccine reaction be reported as an adverse event?



Injection site reactions involving pain, redness and swelling at or near the injection site occur in 10 to 64 % of influenza vaccine recipients.[1] They are inflammatory responses to the foreign material in the vaccine and the tissue irritation caused by the injection process.[2] These reactions occur within 48 hours of vaccination,[2] are usually mild and resolve spontaneously in two to three days.[1]

Symptoms can be managed with cold compresses, acetaminophen or ibuprofen if required for discomfort and reassurance that this is a common occurrence with no serious consequences.[2,3] Pressure should not be applied on the injection site.[2]

An injection site reaction is not a contraindication to future influenza vaccinations.[2] Note, it is not

recommended to take acetaminophen or ibuprofen prophylactically as there is no evidence that this is of benefit[3] and some evidence it might interfere the therapeutic immune response to the vaccine.[4]

Patients should be referred to their doctors or nurse practitioners and reactions reported as adverse events following immunization (AEFI) in the following situations:

- Redness, or swelling, or pain extends past the nearest joint; AND/OR
- Redness, or swelling, or pain persists for 10 days or more[2]

Should the reaction pictured above be reported?
Only if the symptoms last longer than 10 days. It would be important to follow-up with the child's caregiver to find out if the symptoms have resolved.

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References:

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2. BC Centre for Disease Control. Summary of Reporting Criteria. In: Communicable Disease Control Manual Chapter 2: Immunization, Part 5 - Adverse Events Following Immunization. [Accessed 28 Nov 2017.] Available at http://www.bccdc.ca/resource-gallery/Documents/Guidelines%20and%20Forms/Guidelines%20and%20Manuals/Epid/CD%20Manual/Chapter%202%20-%20Imms/Part_5_AEFI.pdf. Accessed Nov. 28, 2017.
3. Vaccine Administration Processes. Page 8: Canadian Immunization Guide: Part 1 - Key Immunization Information. [Accessed 28 Nov 2017.] Available at https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/healthy-living/canadian-immunization-guide-part-1-key-immunization-information/page-8-vaccine-administration-practices.html#tech.
4. Kelso J. Allergic reactions to vaccines. In: UpToDate, Basow, DS (Ed), Waltham MA, 2017. Cited 28 Nov 2017. Available from www.uptodate.com. Subscription and login required