



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY MEDICAL COMMAND  
2050 WORTH ROAD  
FORT SAM HOUSTON, TEXAS 78234-6000

REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF

10 FEB 2004

MCOP

MEMORANDUM FOR Commanders, Regional Medical Commands

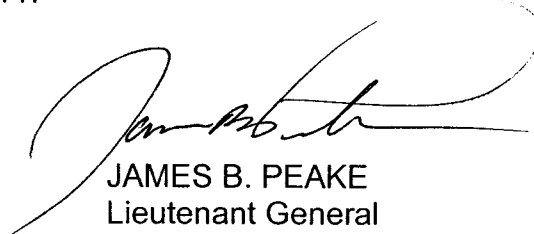
SUBJECT: Learning from Adverse Events After Vaccination--ACTION MEMORANDUM

1. Immunization is one of the most valuable tools available to keep Soldiers healthy. The overwhelming majority of immunizations are followed by mild symptoms, such as soreness at the injection site; severe adverse reactions are extremely rare. Unfortunately, the U.S. Army lost a valuable Soldier in April 2003, a month after receiving five vaccinations during mobilization. Although the evidence was inconclusive, medical experts determined that vaccination may have contributed to her death (Tab A). Additional information about the case is available at [www.vaccines.mil/panelreport.asp](http://www.vaccines.mil/panelreport.asp).
2. Please relay this message to clinicians in your command, noting these key points:
  - Remind vaccinees to seek medical care if they experience medical problems, or they can call the DoD Vaccine Clinical Call Center at 866-210-6469.
  - Remind clinicians to take a vaccination history during patient assessments. Be particularly alert in post-vaccination cases of fever, chest symptoms (e.g., dyspnea, chest pain), or clinical findings such as pleural or pericardial inflammation.
  - In conditions not responding to antibiotics, consider the possibility of autoimmune disease and appropriate treatments for such conditions.
  - Seek specialty consultation as clinically appropriate. Consider the unique consultation resources within the Vaccine Healthcare Center (VHC) Network ([www.vhcinfo.org](http://www.vhcinfo.org), 202-782-0411 (DSN: 662); [askVHC@na.amedd.army.mil](mailto:askVHC@na.amedd.army.mil)).
  - Continue to report adverse events after vaccination to the Vaccine Adverse Events Reporting System (VAERS, [www.vaers.org](http://www.vaers.org)).
  - Continue to follow guidelines for managing adverse events after vaccination ([www.vaccines.mil/pdf/cpguidelines.pdf](http://www.vaccines.mil/pdf/cpguidelines.pdf)). Note there are new guidelines for the evaluation and treatment of myopericarditis after smallpox vaccination.

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- Grant medical exemptions when clinically appropriate. When needed, use consultation services for a second opinion (e.g., Vaccine Healthcare Center Network).
3. For more vaccine resources, take advantage of the experts at the Vaccine Healthcare Center Network ([www.vhcinfo.org](http://www.vhcinfo.org)) and the Military Vaccine Agency ([www.vaccines.mil](http://www.vaccines.mil)).
4. My points of contact for this action are COL John Grabenstein at 703-681-5101 and COL Renata Engler at 202-782-0411.



JAMES B. PEAKE  
Lieutenant General  
Commanding