

Measles Shots

There are probably more than 4 million cases of measles in the United States each year. Despite the fact that many people consider this disease an inevitable and largely harmless experience of childhood probably 450 to 500 die each year from the complications of measles. It is estimated that one case in every 1,000 results in some brain damage which will mar the child for life.

Last week in New York, at a press conference called to announce a newly licensed

one-shot live virus vaccine against the disease, three specialists declared it is high time to eradicate the disease and its potentially dangerous effects from the nation.

The eradication could only be accomplished, they indicated, if measles vaccine were given routinely to all children over the age of about nine months. The evidence of several studies indicates that the new vaccine, as well as the earlier live virus measles vaccines that have been developed, will give life-long immunity to the disease.

All of the live virus measles vaccines now on the market have been derived from a virus isolated and modified for vaccine use by Dr. John F. Enders and colleagues of Harvard Medical School. The new vaccine has been further modified by being grown, for generations, under artificial conditions to reduce its tendency to cause such side effects as fever and rash.

Advocacy of widespread routine use of measles vaccine for young children was expressed at the news conference last week by Dr. John J. Witte, an epidemiologist of the U. S. Public Health Service's Communicable Disease Center in Atlanta; by Dr. Morton Andelman of the Chicago Department of Health and by Dr. Saul Krugman of New York University School of Medicine.

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