

Adel A. F. Mahmoud, M.D., Ph.D.  
President  
Merck Vaccines

Merck & Co., Inc.  
One Merck Drive  
P.O. Box 100  
Whitehouse Station NJ 08889-0100  
Tel 908 423 4316  
Fax 908 735 1232

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Jeffrey P. Koplan, M.D., M.P.H.  
Director  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
1500 Clifton Road  
Atlanta, Georgia 30333

Dear Dr. Koplan:

I am pleased to share with you the following statement:

*Merck recognizes that public trust in the safety of vaccines used in the National Immunization Program is critical to that program's success. Therefore, Merck has assessed its capability to accelerate the manufacture of thimerosal-free vaccines. Beginning in early September 1999 and contingent upon FDA approval of a manufacturing supplement for Merck's hepatitis B vaccine, RECOMBIVAX HB®, the Company believes it could provide sufficient thimerosal-free vaccine (although supplies will be tight) to accomplish the following public health objectives:*

- *Vaccinate all high-risk infants (those born to Hepatitis B Surface Antigen positive mothers) with thimerosal-free hepatitis B vaccine at birth, one and six months of age;*
- *Vaccinate all low-risk infants (those born to Hepatitis B Surface Antigen negative mothers) at birth with thimerosal-free hepatitis B vaccine, followed by a thimerosal-free combination vaccine for hepatitis B and Hib (COMVAX®), at 2, 4, and 12-15 months of age.*

Please let me know if additional information is needed.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adel", written over a white background.

Adel Mahmoud