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To our cochlear implant patients, families, and referring physicians,

As you know, cochlear implant surgery is a safe and effective way to restore hearing for infants, children, and adults with severe to profound hearing loss.

However, there is a small risk of meningitis that can occur following cochlear implant surgery, especially in patients who have abnormal inner ears, a cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) leak during implant surgery, or a history of meningitis.

We need to ensure that ALL cochlear implant patients are properly vaccinated against the most common bacteria seen in these rare cases.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that patients with cochlear implants receive a **PNEUMOCOCCAL** (not meningococcal) vaccination.

The CDC guidelines are listed and can also be found on the Internet at:
<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/mening/cochlear/dis-cochlear-gen.htm>.

- 1) Infants with cochlear implants below age 2 should complete the **Prevnar®** series (part of the routine vaccination schedule for virtually all infants)
- 2) Children with cochlear implants aged 2 years and older who have completed the **Prevnar®** series should receive one dose of **Pneumovax® 23**. If they have just received Prevnar®, they should wait at least two months before receiving **Pneumovax® 23**.
- 3) Children with cochlear implants between 24 and 59 months of age who have never received either Prevnar® or Pneumovax® 23 should receive two doses of **Prevnar®** two or more months apart and then receive one dose of **Pneumovax® 23** at least two months later.
- 4) Children aged 5 years and older and all adults with cochlear implants should receive one dose of **Pneumovax® 23**.
- 5) Adults who have cochlear implants and who received **Pneumovax® 23** in the past **and** are now over age 65 should consider receiving another **Pneumovax® 23** vaccination.

All implant candidates and patients who already have one or two cochlear implants must be vaccinated to decrease the risk of meningitis following surgery.

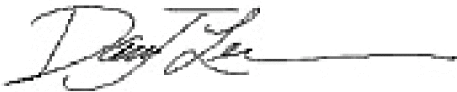
Please bring this letter to your next appointment with your primary care doctor or pediatrician so that the correct pneumococcal vaccine(s) can be given.

We will need you or your doctor to send or fax us written verification that the correct pneumococcal vaccine was given.

Our fax number is (617) 573-3914.

We appreciate your help in keeping cochlear implant surgery safe for all of our patients!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel J Lee", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Daniel J Lee MD FACS