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Vaccine Administration

A Series on Standards for Adult Immunization Practice



Take steps to improve vaccine administration in your office and better protect your patients from vaccine-preventable diseases.

1. Assess patient vaccination status at every visit.

U.S. vaccination rates are extremely low, and research shows that there are many missed opportunities for vaccination of adult patients during clinical encounters.

2. Recommend and offer vaccines at the same visit.

Research shows when patients receive a vaccine recommendation and are offered the vaccine at the same time, they are more likely to get vaccinated. **For vaccines you don't stock, it is still critical to make the recommendation and then refer to another immunization provider.**

See fact sheet 4 in this series for tips on referral.

3. Train and educate your staff on vaccine administration.

Building your staff's skills and confidence in vaccine administration can help improve vaccine delivery and ensure patient safety.

4. Properly store and handle vaccines.

This critical step can reduce wastage.

5. Distribute Vaccine Information Statements (VIS) to patients.

Help your patients make informed decisions about vaccinations by providing them with up-to-date information about the benefits and potential risks for each vaccine they need.

6. Ensure proper care for patients.

Minimize potential risks to your patients by following safety protocols such as having your patients sit or lie down while you administer vaccines.

7. Follow standard precautions to control infection.

Minimize the risks of spreading disease when administering vaccines.

8. Be aware of and prepared for potential adverse reactions.

All vaccines have the potential to cause adverse reactions. Most are minor (e.g., itching, soreness) but severe reactions (e.g., anaphylaxis), while rare, can occur. Make sure you and your staff are prepared to handle severe reactions.

U.S. vaccination rates for adults are extremely low.

For example:

- Only 20% of adults 19 years or older have received Tdap vaccination.
- Only 28% of adults 60 years or older have received zoster (shingles) vaccination.
- Only 20% of adults 19 to 64 years old, at high risk, have received pneumococcal vaccination.
- Only 44% of adults 18 years or older had received flu vaccination during the 2014–2015 flu season.

Sources: NHIS 2014 (MMWR 2016; 64(4)), BRFSS 2014–2015 (www.cdc.gov/flu/fluview)

For resources and tips on vaccine assessment, recommendation, referral, and documentation, visit:

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adultstandards

DON'T WAIT. VACCINATE!



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Resources to Help You and Your Staff Improve Vaccine Administration in Your Practice

- **CDC General Immunization Training**

Self-paced online trainings with free CE or CME credits, webcasts, and more:
www.cdc.gov/vaccines/ed/courses.html

- **Immunization Skills Self-Assessment**

A tool for healthcare staff and supervisors to assess immunization skills and develop a plan of action to improve performance if needed:
www.immunize.org/catg.d/p7010.pdf

- **Storage and Handling**

Training and guidance on proper vaccine storage and handling practices:
www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/storage

- **Dose and Route Chart**

Dose, route, injection site, and needle size information for all adult vaccines:
www.immunize.org/catg.d/p3084.pdf

- **Vaccine Information Statements (VIS)**

Federal law requires that you provide VIS to patients prior to administering certain vaccines; however, it is a best practice to do so for all vaccines because the VIS explains both the vaccine benefits and risks to your patients. You can find print-ready VIS at:
www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/vis

- **Guide to Infection Prevention for Outpatient Care**

A downloadable and printable guide on infection prevention including information regarding protective equipment and safe injection practices:
www.cdc.gov/HAI/settings/outpatient/outpatient-care-guidelines.html

- **Chart of Medical Management of Vaccine Reactions in Adult Patients**

Procedures to follow if various adverse reactions occur:
www.immunize.org/catg.d/p3082.pdf

- **Vaccine Adverse Events Reporting System (VAERS)**

The National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act (NCVIA) requires healthcare providers to report certain adverse events that occur following vaccination. VAERS is a national reporting system that accepts reports on adverse events with vaccines licensed in the United States:
www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/Activities/vaers.html

Standing orders or protocols save time and reduce missed opportunities by authorizing nurses, pharmacists, and other healthcare professionals (where allowed by state law) to assess patient vaccine status and administer vaccinations without examination or direct order from the attending provider.

For sample standing orders, visit: www.immunize.org/standing-orders

For more information and resources on adult immunization,
visit: www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/adults