

Immunization Update

News for New Mexico
Vaccines for Children Providers



Immunization Update is published by the New Mexico Department of Health.

Newsbriefs:

Hib Vaccine Shortage

The nation-wide Hib vaccine shortage will likely continue into the 4th quarter of 2008. Do not administer the Hib booster dose (4th dose) to healthy, non-American Indian children 12-15 month olds until further notice from VFC.

New Vaccines Available through VFC:

Pentacel (DTaP-IPV-Hib) offers an alternative source of Hib, but should not be used for the 4th dose during the Hib shortage.

Kinrix DTaP-IPV is approved for the 4-6 year old booster dose of these antigens.

Rotarix is a two-dose rotavirus series.

For more information on new vaccines, and for the VFC vaccine order form, visit our website at : www.health.state.nm.us/immunize

Vaccine Safety: Addressing Parent Concerns

Much recent media coverage has been given to the concerns of parents who oppose immunization for their children. With perspectives of vaccine safety often skewed by media reports, how can your practice best address parental concerns about immunization?

VFC encourages providers to take a moment early on and describe to parents the power of the immune system. Immunologists sometimes offer this comparison: At the two month visit, children are going to have eight vaccine antigens added to their immune system. Given the overall antigenic load the immune system handles, this is comparable to adding eight cups of water to an ocean.

Taking parents' concerns seriously will help establish trust and rapport. Also, discuss true contraindications with parents. Remember: Federal law requires that Vaccine Information Statements be given to parents for their records **each time** before shots are given.

Besides citing scientific evidence of vaccine safety, practical considerations you may wish

to discuss with parents include:

- Choosing not to vaccinate endangers not only their child but others as well. Children at risk include those who are too young to be immunized, or those who have true contraindications to immunization.
- In the event of a disease outbreak, their child may be excluded from attending school.
- Scheduling multiple visits for shots that can be administered together may be more traumatic for the child than if all were given during a single session.



If a parent in your practice still refuses immunizations,

document the parent's refusal in the child's chart.

The Centers for Disease Control offers this guidance: "Excluding patients from your practice whose parents decline immunizations is not deemed the best public health strategy. Remember, unimmunized young children did not decide for themselves to forgo vaccination. If you don't care for them, who will?"

Flu Season Ahead!

The New Mexico VFC program expects to receive over 200,000 doses of influenza vaccine for the 2008-09 flu season. Almost half of this vaccine will be in the form of FluMist nasal spray. MedImmune, the FluMist manufacturer, will send all VFC providers a kit on how to administer the vaccine.

Flu vaccine allocations will be shipped directly from McKesson to providers beginning in September or October. Beginning with the 2008-09 flu season,



Photo credit: CDC

the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) has recommended for the first time that all children aged 5-18 years receive flu shots.

To begin reaching this new target group, the DOH is sponsoring a pilot program this fall to deliver flu vaccine in schools. More than 30 schools throughout the state will offer free flu vaccine to all students during in-school clinics.

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI): Infrastructure for Better Care

Why CQI?

VFC providers have a big job—the number of recommended vaccines is growing and schedules are becoming more complicated. At the same time, economic realities mean they're asked to provide service more cost effectively than ever.

CQI reflects the basic philosophy of the Immunization Program, and offers a framework to improve care by asking:

Where are we now?

We can't improve without first knowing where we are. Documenting immunization coverage rates is a first step. CQI is ultimately about providing standards of best practice to improve patient care and well-being. The DOH tracks the use of best practices and coverage levels during the VFC site visit.

How can we do better?

CQI focuses on a team approach that seeks not to blame, but to support continual learning and process improvement. The DOH believes that collaborative partnerships are key to improving care for New Mexicans.

We encourage providers to examine their processes for:

Patient Screening Do patients receive all vaccines for which they are eligible, no matter what the reason for their visit?

Vaccine Management Does the system of ordering and inventory keep all vaccines in stock without expiration or wastage?

Vaccine Administration Are staff comfortable administering multiple injections at the same visit?

Client communications What are the most efficient reminder and recall methods to get patients back in on time for shots?

Documentation Can the complete, updated immunization histories of patients be easily accessed to save time and avoid over-immunization?



Resources:

- American Academy of Pediatrics
www.aap.org/quality_improvement
- Immunization Action Coalition
www.immunize.org
- New Mexico Department of Health Immunization Program
Quality Improvement: 505-827-0196

Keeping up with Adolescent Immunizations

The introduction in the past three years of meningococcal conjugate (MCV4), HPV, and Tdap vaccines means preventive visits for adolescents. As children move into adolescence they are at a greater risk of catching diseases like meningitis and Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). Also, the immunity from childhood vaccines can diminish over time.

To learn more about the latest recommendations, educational materials, and special challenges of adolescent immunization, check out CDC's adolescent immunization page at:

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/spec-grps/preteens-adol.htm





Love Me. Protect Me. Immunize Me.

VFC Site Visits

The site visit: a two-way conversation

VFC's goal is to visit each provider once a year to provide program updates, meet new staff, discuss your immunization activities, assist you with any immunization-related problems, provide updated materials, and answer any questions you may have.

How is information from the chart reviews used?

The focus of the chart review is quality improvement. The immunization histories collected can help highlight practice strengths and pinpoint areas that might need improvement. In the aggregate, they help us estimate immunity levels at the state and local level.

Manual chart pulls will be phased out over the next few years in favor of NMSIIS electronic reviews as the NMSIIS record becomes more complete.

Information you can use

Reviewers do their best to accommodate your schedules and are committed to using your time efficiently. During the visit, DOH staff can:

- Help trouble-shoot vaccine storage problems;
- Answer your NMSIIS-related questions, or give you a NMSIIS demonstration if you are not yet using it;
- Help arrange follow-up assistance if your staff needs more training; and
- Give you on-line links to immunization-related websites.

Tell us what you think

Site visits are your chance to give feedback to VFC! Try to include as many of your staff as possible in the feedback session.

In 2007:

- Average coverage rates for the 43133* series by provider type were:
 - Indian Health Service: 86%
 - Federally Qualified Health Centers: 78%
 - Private providers: 75%
 Overall, New Mexico's rates are 10-15% higher than in 2002!
- About 72% of providers indicated they were entering current shots into NMSIIS.
- Record-keeping improved: only six providers did not have an easily accessible consolidated immunization record.

*4 DTaP, 3 Polio, 1 MMR, 3 Hep B, and 3 Hib

The DOH would like to thank all of the 327 VFC providers who had site visits in 2007 for their patience and dedication!



Thermometer Update

By now all New Mexico VFC providers should have received and installed the certified digital thermometers that were shipped in June 2008.



Make sure that the sensor unit is centrally placed in the unit and alarm is turned on.

The certification on 2005 VFC thermometers has expired and thus they cannot be used to store vaccine in compliance with CDC standards. VFC

asks that you keep these older units as back-ups to use in case a newer unit malfunctions.

Immunization Training Opportunities



Could your staff use a refresher on the hows & whys of immunization? Child Health Immunization Learning Initiative (CHILI) classes taught by experienced Immunization nurses are scheduled around New Mexico and are free for VFC providers and others.

To register for a class or for more information call: **505-827-2415.**

New Mexico Statewide Immunization Information System (NMSIIS)

Checking NMSIIS records can ensure timely and age-appropriate immunization for your clients.

During 2007 site visit coverage surveys, NMSIIS records were checked whenever possible for children who were not up-to-date. Shots were found in NMSIIS that were not in patient's charts at 36% of provider offices, and raised coverage rates for these providers by as much as 30%.

NMSIIS thanks you for your support!

REMINDER: DO NOT EVER SHARE YOUR NMSIIS PASSWORD!

Please contact the **Help Desk** for new **passwords** for new staff or to inactivate passwords for individuals no longer with your practice/organization.

If you need **NMSIIS training**, please contact the **Help Desk**. Please have the following information ready for the technician:

- Your practice/organization name
- The VFC PIN (if your practice or organization does not have one, you will be assigned a unique number for your site)
- The contact person for your organization (every practice or organization has a person designated as the NMSIIS Administrator)
- A contact number and email

Once you contact the **Help Desk** you will be assigned a **heat ticket** with a number for your request. Your request is forwarded to the **Immunization Program**. Our goal is to respond to your request within 24 hours. If you are available when we contact you, an attempt will be made to resolve your issue at that time. If you are not available we will leave a phone and/or e-mail message.

CONTACT US AT: 1-800-280-1618 OR DOH-HelpDesk-Main@state.nm.us



NEW MEXICO
DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH

Immunization Program
1190 St. Francis Drive
Harold Runnels Building
Santa Fe, N.M. 87505