

# Best Practice Guidelines

*Unvaccinated children can spread diseases to others who are too young to be fully vaccinated, cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons, or are among the small number of people whose vaccinations were ineffective.*

To improve and maintain vaccination rates, the National Vaccine Advisory Committee (NVAC) devised a national set of standards for child and adolescent immunization practices in 1992.

NVAC recently revised these practice standards to:

- Focus on making vaccines more easily available,
- Communicate vaccine information effectively,
- Implement strategies to improve vaccination rates, and
- Develop community partnerships to help reach target patient populations.

These standards for immunization practices will help reduce our country's health care costs and the burden of vaccine-preventable morbidity and mortality.

## **NVAC's Revised Standards for Child and Adolescent Immunization Practices**

### **Availability of vaccines**

1. Vaccination services are readily available.
2. Vaccinations are coordinated with other health care services and provided in a medical home when possible.
3. Barriers to vaccination are identified and minimized.
4. Patient costs are minimized.

### **Assessment of vaccination status**

5. Health care professionals review the vaccination and health status of patients at every encounter to determine which vaccines are indicated.
6. Health care professionals assess for and follow only medically indicated contraindications.

### **Effective communication about vaccine benefits and risks**

7. Parents/guardians and patients are educated about the benefits and risks of vaccination in a culturally appropriate manner and in easy-to-understand language.

### **Proper storage and administration of vaccines and documentation of vaccinations**

8. Health care professionals follow appropriate procedures for vaccine storage and handling.
9. Up-to-date, written vaccination protocols are accessible at all locations where vaccines are administered.
10. Persons who administer vaccines and staff who manage or support vaccine administration are knowledgeable and receive ongoing education.
11. Health care professionals simultaneously administer as many indicated vaccine doses as possible.
12. Vaccination records for patients are accurate, complete, and easily accessible.
13. Health care professionals report adverse events following vaccination promptly and accurately to the Vaccine Adverse Events Reporting System and are aware of a separate program, the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program.
14. All personnel who have contact with patients are appropriately vaccinated.

### **Implementation of strategies to improve vaccination coverage**

15. Systems are used to remind parents/guardians, patients, and health care professionals when vaccinations are due and to recall those who are overdue.
16. Office- or clinic-based patient record reviews and vaccination coverage assessments are performed annually.
17. Health care professionals practice community-based approaches.

## **For More Information**

Standards for Child and Adolescent Immunization Practices. National Vaccine Advisory Committee. *Pediatrics* 2003;112:958-963. <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/112/4/958>.

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### **Source**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Revised Standards for Immunization Practices, Child & Adolescent and Adult Immunization. [www.cdc.gov/nip/recs/rev-immz-stds.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nip/recs/rev-immz-stds.htm).