

Missed Opportunities

Studies have shown that eliminating missed opportunities could increase vaccination coverage up to 20 percent.

A missed opportunity occurs when a patient is eligible for vaccines but is not completely vaccinated. To ensure children in our communities are properly vaccinated, physicians must use every opportunity to vaccinate them when needed.

Why Physicians May Miss Opportunities

- Lack the resources to implement a viable reminder/recall system.
- Lack access to a patient's previous vaccination record.
- Partially or incorrectly review a patient's vaccination record.
- Fail to give a patient all of his or her recommended vaccines during a single office visit.
- Misinterpret contraindications.
- Refer patients to public health clinics or other sources of low-cost or free vaccines. These referrals can make it more difficult for some patients to get vaccinations because going to another vaccination source may not be an option.
- Presume current office immunization procedures are working and don't need improvement.

How You Can Reduce Missed Opportunities in Your Practice

- Use a standing order protocol that allows nonphysician vaccination personnel to vaccinate your patients in hospitals and clinics without your direct involvement.
- Open your office after business hours or on weekends for vaccination visits only.
- Decrease the office wait time for your patients with vaccination appointments.
- Keep your practice up to date with the latest information, best practices, and schedules for vaccinations.
- Keep your ill and well patients' records updated and available.
- Implement a reminder/recall system.



Sources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Epidemiology and Prevention of Vaccine-Preventable Diseases [The Pink Book]*. Atkinson W, Hamborsky J, McIntyre L, Wolfe S, eds. 10th ed. Washington D.C.: Public Health Foundation; 2008. www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/pinkbook/default.htm.

Immunization Toolkit: Adult, Military and Childhood Immunizations. 5th ed. Washington, D.C.: Vaccine Healthcare Centers Network; 2007. www.vhinfo.org/downloads/TTK.pdf.