

Help improve your pharmacy's adult vaccination process

The following steps include suggestions that other pharmacists have reported to be useful in creating successful vaccination programs in their pharmacies.

Adult vaccination can be approached in different ways; some suggestions may be more relevant for your organization than others. Building a system that efficiently utilizes time, personnel, and resources can make vaccination a more seamless part of your daily workflow.

Keep in mind that laws and regulations concerning in-store pharmacy vaccinations vary by state. Consult the appropriate resources, including the relevant state pharmacy board, for more information.

Make vaccination a team effort

Pharmacists, technicians, and other pharmacy staff all play a critical role in an effective vaccination routine.

- ☐ Establish a store protocol for educating staff about adult vaccines and the diseases they can help prevent.
- ☐ Assign pharmacy employees specific, manageable tasks as part of the vaccination process, and look to them to champion those responsibilities.

Be proactive communicators

It's important to actively identify, initiate, and educate patients in order to ultimately improve vaccination rates.

- ☐ Choose specific times during patient prescription processing to review a patient's history (eg, prescription drop-off, pickup, or in conjunction with other counseling opportunities) and assess if he or she is eligible for vaccination based on age, comorbid conditions, or other risk factors.
- ☐ Ensure there is a process for documenting review of a patient's vaccination status and evaluation of his or her eligibility.
- ☐ Situate patient education materials so they are easy for pharmacy staff to find and consider proactively distributing these materials to patients.
- ☐ Proactively approach patients and discuss the benefits and risks of adult vaccines administered in your pharmacy.
- ☐ Confirm that staff members are comfortable speaking to patients about vaccine reimbursement coverage and co-payments.
- ☐ Become comfortable discussing simultaneous administration of more than one vaccine in a single visit, if appropriate.
- ☐ Develop a reminder system for patients who are initially undecided about receiving a vaccine; have a process for ensuring that the patient has a vaccine prescription, if one is required.
- ☐ Ensure your pharmacy has the capability to make patient appointments for vaccination; however, walk-in patients may represent the greatest opportunity to improve vaccination rates.

Collaborate with community health care partners

They are a great source of support and critical to closing the loop on patient care.

- ☐ Establish communication with community physicians and provide any updates to your pharmacy's vaccination services.
- ☐ Assign a staff champion to contact a patient's physician in a timely manner, when appropriate.
- ☐ Send vaccination documentation to physicians in a timely and consistent fashion.

Optimize your workspace

In an efficient pharmacy, once the patient has decided to be vaccinated, the time it takes to administer a vaccine can be similar to the time it takes to fill a prescription.¹

- ☐ Display educational materials prominently, as allowed, for patients to view and find easily. They can read these materials as they wait for other pharmacy services, which can help educate patients about vaccination and provide them with an opportunity to ask questions.
- ☐ Ensure all vaccine materials and supplies are well organized and easily accessible, and that there is a designated area to administer vaccines.
- ☐ Assign a staff champion to help stay organized and up to date with all paperwork that should be processed for vaccines, such as Vaccine Information Statements (VIS), consent forms, or vaccination cards for patients.

Refine your inventory protocol

Develop a plan that enables your staff to regularly check the conditions of the materials you need.

- ☐ Assign a staff champion to check the temperature of the refrigerator or freezer at the same time every day—the beginning of the day may be optimal. Staff should keep a temperature log that keeps track of this.
- ☐ Assign a staff champion to monitor expiration dates of the vaccines and their diluents approximately once a month, as you would for other pharmacy medications.
- ☐ Anticipate and prepare for times when there may be increased demand for multiple vaccines (eg, summer or fall).

Reference: 1. Bach AT, Goad JA. The role of community pharmacy-based vaccination in the USA: current practice and future directions. *Int Pharm Res Pract.* 2015;4:67-77.



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