



# **Immunizations 101**

Best Practices in Vaccine  
Administration Handbook

## The Importance of Immunization Training

A vaccine is a biological product used to evoke the immune system to make antibodies against a vaccine-preventable disease. Administering vaccines may look simple, but making sure the patient develops an effective immune response depends on many factors, which include:

1. Proper Storage & Handling
2. Proper screening of patients for conditions that may require delaying or not giving a vaccination.
3. Giving the right vaccine at the right time
4. Proper injection technique into the right site and using the right route
5. Having safety and emergency protocols in place for rare adverse events

What happens when one of these factors is violated?

1. Patients are unprotected, may get the disease, and may suffer disease complications
2. Patients lose confidence in vaccines
3. Patients may have to be revaccinated
4. Patients may have an adverse event that could have been prevented
5. Staff time is spent correcting a preventable event

The role of Vaccine Coordinator, Back-up Coordinator and Immunizer requires training and accepting responsibility. See “Immunizer Responsibility” handout for a description of what it entails.

# Immunizer Responsibility

As an immunizer, you have accepted responsibility to understand and practice safe handling and administration of vaccines. The patient is relying on you. Here is a basic list of what an immunizer needs to know:

## Vaccine Storage:

- Using proper storage units, thermometers or data loggers
- Maintaining Cold Chain
- Inspecting delivered vaccines for any break in cold chain
- Rotating vaccines by expiration date
- Identifying/reporting problems involving improper use or storage of vaccines
- Monitoring and recording storage unit temps twice daily
- Following your Vaccine Management plan for temp excursions or power failures

## Before You Vaccinate, you need to have knowledge of:

- The “General Rules of Vaccines”
- How to optimize vaccination opportunities and decrease missed opportunities
- The federal law to give a Vaccine Information Statement (VIS) for each vaccine at each visit
- Eligibility requirements for the Vaccines For Children Program (VFC) and 317 Adult Program
- Vaccine schedules for children, teens, adults and health care workers
- How to screen patients for contraindications and precautions to vaccination
- How to use the Recommended/Minimum Ages and Intervals Between Doses Chart

## Giving Vaccines:

- Knowing what to do in case a patient has an allergic reaction
  - Where is your policy/procedure manual and what does it say
  - Where is the emergency equipment
- How to use the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS)
- The 6 Rights (Right: Patient, vaccine, dose, route, time, documentation)
- Inspecting vaccine/diluents for damage or contamination
- Checking expiration date before giving vaccine
- Drawing up vaccine immediately before administering
- Preparing vaccines: single dose, multi-dose, pre-filled syringes, reconstituted
- Vaccine names and abbreviations
- How to use vaccines with diluents

# Vaccine Coordinator

## The Role of the Vaccine Coordinator

Vaccines are expensive and sensitive to temperature. Careful vaccine management is essential to protecting your vaccine supply.

VFC requires providers to designate a fully trained Vaccine Coordinator and a Backup Vaccine Coordinator to implement routine and emergency vaccine management plans. Their names and contact information must be reported to the VFC Program through [MyVFCVaccines.org](http://MyVFCVaccines.org). In many practices, the Vaccine Coordinator is a medical assistant. In other practices, the Vaccine Coordinator is an LVN, RN, office manager, or other staff person. The Vaccine Coordinator and Backup Vaccine Coordinator must be on site.



## Responsibilities of the Vaccine Coordinator

The Vaccine Coordinator's responsibilities vary depending on the amount of vaccine the practice gives and practice protocols. In some practices, the Vaccine Coordinator is responsible for all vaccine management activities, including training other (especially new) staff. In other practices, a different person may have one or more vaccine management responsibilities, such as ordering vaccines. Below is a list of the most essential responsibilities.

### Receiving vaccines

- Be present when vaccine is delivered and immediately process it into inventory.
- Ensure that acceptable temperature ranges have been maintained.

### Storing vaccines

- Rotate the vaccine inventory so that vaccines with shorter expiration dates are used first.
- Ensure that there are no expired vaccines in the refrigerator or freezer.
- Keep VFC vaccine separate from private vaccine stock.
- Perform routine cleaning on vaccine storage units.

### Monitoring vaccine temperatures

- Use a certified calibrated temperature monitoring device to review refrigerator and freezer temperatures.
- Set up temperature monitoring devices.
- Read and record minimum, current, and maximum temperatures on a VFC-supplied log twice a day.
- Take immediate action if temperatures are outside acceptable ranges.
- Implement the emergency vaccine management plan, if necessary.
- Review, download and analyze temperature data every 2 weeks or sooner if there is a temperature excursion.
- Retain all paper logs and electronic records for 3 years.

### Ordering vaccines

- Perform a physical inventory of all vaccines in stock.
- Account for doses of returned or transferred vaccines since the last order.
- Complete and submit the VFC vaccine order at [MyVFCVaccines.org](http://MyVFCVaccines.org).