

Implementing the 16-Year-Old Immunization Visit: A How-To Tool for Health Care Practices



Measure adolescent immunization rates to get a baseline and set goals for improvement



Identify and reach out to vaccine-eligible patients (eg, remind and recall)



Adopt a team approach to getting teens immunized and designate a vaccine champion to lead the effort



Capitalize on opportunities to immunize (check immunization status at every patient visit)



Foster a culture of prevention, including scheduling annual preventive health visits for all teens



Educate families about the 16-year-old visit far in advance

In 2017, prompted by low immunization rates for a number of adolescent vaccines, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) created a separate column for adolescents 16 years of age on its immunization schedule, thus identifying the 16-year-old vaccination visit as a standard of care.

A routine immunization visit, or “platform,” at age 16, similar to the platform that exists for adolescents 11–12 years of age, creates the opportunity to deliver not only immunizations but also other preventive services uniquely relevant to the needs of these older teens. Every health care practice can take action to make the 16-year-old visit a reality and to create an expectation among adolescents, parents, and health care professionals that 16 years is an age when vaccines and other well-care services are routinely provided—and that such services are vital.

Listed at left are 6 steps to help implement a 16-year-old immunization visit. Specific actions related to each step are listed on the back of this sheet.

SEE CHECKLIST OF ACTIONS →

6 Steps to Implementing the 16-Year-Old Immunization Visit



Measure adolescent immunization rates.

- Obtain a baseline (eg, how many of the practice's 16-year-olds have received the second dose of quadrivalent meningococcal conjugate vaccine [MenACWY]).
- Gather data based on chart reviews for *all* 16-year-olds in the practice, not just for those who come in for routine checks or illness.
- Reassess rates periodically to benchmark improvement efforts.



Identify and reach out to vaccine-eligible patients.

- Systematically check patients' immunization status via an immunization information system (IIS). Supplement with checks of the practice's own records.
- Send reminder-recall notices to teens who are due or overdue for vaccination. Use electronic medical record (EMR) best practice alerts to generate notifications to patients as well as reminders to staff.



Adopt a team approach.

- Hold a staff meeting to see that all employees understand the importance of the new immunization platform at 16 years of age and its details.
- Designate a vaccine champion or team of champions to lead the practice's immunization efforts.
- Develop a routine vaccination process with specifically assigned responsibilities for staff (eg, check immunization status, issue reminders and recalls, update records, speak to families about vaccines).
- Use standing orders to enable appropriately trained personnel to independently screen patients and administer recommended vaccines.



Capitalize on opportunities to immunize.

- Check immunization status before or during *every* patient visit.
- Use EMR alerts or "immunization due" clips on paper charts to notify staff at the point of care that vaccinations are needed.
- Adopt standing orders.



Foster a culture of prevention.

- Develop talking points to use with adolescents about the potential severity of meningococcal disease, human papillomavirus (HPV), and influenza as well as the consequences of transmitting infections to vulnerable people, such as pertussis to infants.
- Discuss the availability of safe and effective vaccines. Unequivocally recommend vaccination, and present all vaccines that are due as a "package."
- Schedule annual preventive health visits for all adolescents through 18 years of age.
- Encourage parents to proactively schedule the 16-year-old office visit.



Educate families about the 16-year-old visit far in advance.

- Provide short, clear messages about the milestone 16-year-old visit, and deliver them early and often; start at the 11- to 12-year-old immunization platform visit.
- Add content on the 16-year-old visit to the practice's website and post to Twitter, Facebook, and other social media channels.

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RESOURCES

• Immunization Action Coalition (IAC)

Top 10 Ways to Improve Adolescent Immunization Rates
www.give2menacwy.org/improve-your-rates/top-10

You're 16...We Recommend These Vaccines for You!
www.immunize.org/catg.d/p4022.pdf

Sample standing orders
www.immunize.org/standing-orders

MenACWY: You're Not Done If You Give Just One;
Give 2 Doses to Strengthen Protection
www.Give2MenACWY.org

• National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID)

www.adolescentvaccination.org

• American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) Foundation

Highlight on VACCINATIONS 4 TEENS Resource Library
www.aafpfoundation.org/vaccinations4teens

• Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Quality improvement projects targeting immunization
www.cdc.gov/vaccines/ed/quality-improvement-proj.html

Preteen and Teen Vaccine Resources
<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/resources/teen.html>

• Association of Immunization Managers (AIM)

www.immunizationmanagers.org/page/adolescents

• Unity Consortium – United for Adolescent Vaccination

www.unity4teenvax.org



The Adolescent Immunization Initiative (AII) is a multidisciplinary group of experts in adolescent health and immunization, assembled under the sponsorship of Sanofi Pasteur, whose mission is to collaborate with stakeholders to establish an immunization platform at 16 years of age.