



Standards for Adult Immunization Practice

What are the Standards for Adult Immunization Practice (the Standards)?

The Standards are guidelines that help adult health care providers make sure all patients are up-to-date on recommended immunizations. They were created by the National Vaccine Advisory Committee.

The Standards for Adult Immunization Practice

- 1. ASSESS** the immunization status of all adult patients at every clinical encounter.
- 2. Strongly RECOMMEND** vaccines that adult patients need.
- 3. ADMINISTER** needed vaccines or **REFER** patients to a provider who can.
- 4. DOCUMENT** vaccines received by your adult patients.

Why are the Standards important?

Adult immunization rates in New York City (NYC) are low:

- **In 2015, only 44 percent of adults 18 years and older in NYC received the flu vaccine.**¹ The nationally established Healthy People 2020 goal for flu vaccine coverage is 70 percent. While coverage is better in older New Yorkers (66 percent in adults aged 65 and older¹) than younger residents, preventable deaths from influenza continue to disproportionately affect older adults. In 2015, influenza and pneumonia continued to be the third-leading cause of death for all New Yorkers; there were 2,220 deaths, with the majority of these occurring in adults aged 65 and older.²
- **In 2013, only 55 percent of adults aged 65 and older in NYC received a pneumococcal vaccine.**³ The Healthy People 2020 goal for pneumococcal vaccine coverage is 90 percent. In addition to being far below national goals, NYC coverage is lower than coverage in New York State (65 percent) and the nation (69 percent).⁴
- **In 2013, only 19 percent of adults aged 18 and older in NYC received the Tdap vaccine.**⁴ About one in 20 adults with pertussis are hospitalized and others may have complications, which could include pneumonia.

Your adult patients are likely not aware of the vaccines they need. A recommendation from a health care professional is the strongest predictor of whether patients will get vaccinated. The Standards can help you make sure your adult patients are immunized.

Sources: (1) NYC Community Health Survey 2015; (2) Summary of Vital Statistics 2015 City of New York; (3) Expanded Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System 2013–2014 Health Indicators, New York City; (4) Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System 2013, New York City.

See the other side of this guide for a checklist to help you implement the Standards at your facility.

How can providers implement the Standards?

Use this checklist to implement the Standards at your facility.

ASSESS the immunization status of all adult patients at every clinical encounter.

- Stay up-to-date on the latest recommendations for adults from the Advisory Committee for Immunization Practice (ACIP). See the **Recommended Immunization Schedule for Adults Aged 19 Years or Older, United States**, in this toolkit. These recommendations are updated annually.
- Include vaccine assessments in your workflow with these simple methods:
 - Have patients fill out an intake form at check-in so you can determine which vaccines they may need. Refer to the **Patient Self-Screening Form** in this toolkit for an example of an intake form.
 - Integrate vaccine prompts into electronic medical records.
 - Use NYC Citywide Immunization Registry (CIR) decision-support tools.
 - Send your patients reminders for vaccines that are due and past due.

The CIR is a database of patient immunization records, which are submitted by health care providers. The New York City Health Department maintains the CIR. See the **CIR Card** in this toolkit for more information.

Strongly RECOMMEND vaccines that adult patients need.

- Respond to your patients' questions and concerns in plain language.
- Explain the benefits of getting vaccinated and how vaccines protect against diseases.
- Share positive vaccination stories with patients to strengthen their confidence in vaccination.
- Refer to the **How to Make a Strong Recommendation for Needed Vaccines Card** in this toolkit for ways to discuss vaccines and strategies to overcome patient hesitancy to getting vaccines.

ADMINISTER needed vaccines or **REFER** patients to a provider who can.

- Recommend and offer vaccines at the same visit.
- Create non-patient specific standing orders for nurses or pharmacists to assess for and administer needed vaccines. Refer to the **Non-Patient Specific Standing Orders for Adult Vaccinations: An Implementation Guide for Clinicians** in this toolkit for more information.
- Train and educate your staff on vaccine administration.
- Properly store and handle vaccines. See the **Vaccine Storage and Handling Guide** in this toolkit for more information.
- Refer your patients to other immunizing providers in the area for vaccines you don't stock.
- Follow up with patients at their next visit to confirm they have received the recommended vaccination.

Pharmacists can obtain non-patient specific standing orders from a licensed physician or nurse practitioner. The Health Department offers this service to pharmacies that do not have an authorized signatory. Email nycflu@health.nyc.gov to learn more.

DOCUMENT vaccines received by your adult patients.

- Enroll and participate in the CIR to help your office, your patients and other providers know which vaccines your patients have received.
- Record administered vaccines in your electronic medical record.
- Give patients a copy of their vaccine history.

The information in this checklist has been adapted from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) materials. For additional tools and resources on the Standards for Adult Immunization Practice, visit cdc.gov and search **immunization standards**.