

# Immunization Safety

VACCINE HEALTHCARE CENTERS NETWORK



## Safety Tips:

- *Screening is essential for Immunization Safety*
- *Understand the risks and benefits before vaccination*
- *Practitioners and Patients should maintain records*
- *Contact VHC for questions and concerns*

## Proper Screening is Essential

Screening is one of the most essential elements of immunization safety. Before patients receive an immunization, they should be properly screened to determine their current health status and if they have any contraindications for a particular vaccine. Patients should also be given a Vaccine Information Statement (VIS) and understand vaccine(s) risks and

benefits before they receive immunizations.

Screening questionnaires differ from institution to institution, however their purpose of ensuring safe vaccine administration is universal. Vaccines are medications and may not be the best choice for some individuals. Examples of important screening questions include:

- Current health status
- Allergies (food or medications including vaccines)
- Chronic health disorders
- Current medications
- Pregnancy status
- Vaccination history

In addition, some vaccines have special contraindications and require additional patient screening questions.

## Keeping Records

Accurate immunization record keeping is vital for the safe administration of vaccines. Vaccines are administered in many different healthcare settings and record keeping may vary between institutions, however standard elements should be part of any vaccine documentation. Standard documentation should include: vaccine type, date given, route, site, lot

number, whether a VIS was received, and the vaccinator's signature.

Patients are strongly encouraged to keep a copy of their vaccination record for themselves and their children. This individual record can help remind individuals when their next vaccine is due and also serves as an easy record of proof

of immunization status for day care, school, and work. Keeping accurate records can help prevent repeat vaccinations. If you cannot locate your personal immunization record, sometimes a blood test may be arranged to determine your immunity.

*"Patients should be given a Vaccine Information Statement (VIS) before every vaccination."*

## Contact VHC

- **For VHC info:**  
Phone: (202) 782-0411  
[www.vhcinfo.org](http://www.vhcinfo.org)
- **24/7 Vaccine Call Center**  
1-866-210-6469

## After Immunization Care

Vaccinations, like other medications, may have side effects that require attention and care. Most of these side effects are minor and may include: redness, soreness, pain, and low grade fever. Often supportive care such as a cold compress or anti-inflammatory medications is recommended for these minor side effects.

If symptoms are more severe or persist, it is recommended that you contact a health provider right away.

The Vaccine Healthcare Centers Network is a DoD organization that provides assistance to service members and their families. VHC team members are clinical vaccine experts

who provide answers and clinical consultation to you or your health provider, if a health problem occurs after your shots. The VHC can also help you file a Vaccine Adverse Events Reporting System (VAERS) report and assess the need for a vaccine exemption.

**Immunization Awareness Month - August**