

# Reducing Vaccine Administration Errors

**WEBCAST AND DISCUSSION SEMINAR** (available at [www2.cdc.gov/vaccines/ed/nurses](http://www2.cdc.gov/vaccines/ed/nurses))

**Vaccine administration errors are potentially dangerous occurrences that many immunization providers miss. Don't be guilty of common vaccine administration errors. But if and when they do occur, be ready to respond appropriately.**

**Target Group** Healthcare personnel (HCP) or administrators who are concerned about vaccine administration errors in their healthcare setting. This session was planned for nurses, by nurses, but the information would be of value to any immunization provider.

**Discussion Guide** This guide serves as a resource for individuals who want to facilitate a meeting, training, or discussion on this topic in your hospital, practice, clinic, or other healthcare setting. The guide accompanies a webcast (available at [www2.cdc.gov/vaccines/ed/nurses](http://www2.cdc.gov/vaccines/ed/nurses)) which should be viewed before attending the live seminar.

**Learning Objectives** The overall goal of this session is to provide participants with information about vaccine administration errors, including how to identify them, respond to them, and take preventive actions to avoid them in the first place.

After viewing the webcast and participating in the discussion session, participants will be able to:

- 1) Discuss the scope of vaccine administration error issues.
- 2) Identify common types of vaccine administration errors.
- 3) Identify measures to take when responding to vaccine administration errors.
- 4) Describe strategies which can help decrease vaccine administration errors.
- 5) Identify resources for proper vaccine administration.

## Discussion Questions for Your Group

**The Big Picture** *To be used to facilitate discussion among participants after they have viewed the webcast.*

- Vaccine administration errors: What is the scope of this problem in your healthcare setting?
- Are you confident you are identifying any vaccine administration errors that occur in your healthcare setting?
- Are you responding to vaccine administration errors correctly?
- Are you doing what you can to prevent vaccine administration errors from happening in the first place?
- What steps do you want to put into place in your healthcare setting to reduce the potential for vaccine administration errors?

## Self-Assessment Questions

**The “Nitty-Gritty”  
Test-Your-Knowledge  
Questions** *Although these questions may be helpful in general discussions, they were developed mainly for training and individual self-assessment.*

- Is it safe to give a vaccine directly into an area where there is a tattoo?
- Where can I obtain standing orders for vaccination?
- Is it necessary to wear gloves when we administer vaccines?

## Self-Assessment Questions *(continued)*

- Are vaccine diluents interchangeable?
- When a vaccine vial is new and the cap has just been removed, is the rubber stopper sterile, or should it be cleansed with alcohol before inserting the needle?
- Is it recommended to change needles after a vaccine dose has been drawn into a syringe?
- When patients need multiple vaccines (e.g., influenza and pneumococcal), can we just combine them into the same syringe?
- Is it okay to draw up vaccines at the beginning of the shift? If not, how much in advance can this be done?
- Do you need to aspirate before giving a vaccination?
- While giving an injection, a nurse had blood return in the syringe upon aspirating. What should she have done with the vaccine?
- If some portion of a vaccine (e.g., influenza) leaks out of the syringe while it is being injected into a patient, does the dose need to be repeated? If so, when?
- Why are some vaccinations given subcutaneously while others must be given intramuscularly?
- What should we do if we give an injection by the wrong route (e.g., IM instead of SC)?
- One of our staff gave a dose of pediatric hepatitis A vaccine to an adult patient by mistake. How do we remedy this error?
- What length of needle should be used to give IM injections to infants? One of our clinical coordinators says a 1" needle and another says a 5/8" needle.
- If I have to give more than 1 injection in a muscle, are certain vaccines best given together?
- When giving 2 IM injections in the same limb, what is the minimum spacing between the 2 injection sites?

**Looking for the answers?** Go to [www.immunize.org/askexperts/experts\\_general.asp#admin](http://www.immunize.org/askexperts/experts_general.asp#admin).

### **Check your learning. Did you achieve the learning objectives?**

*Questions to review at the end of the session.*

- 1) Can you discuss the scope of the problem of vaccine administration errors?
- 2) Can you identify the common types of vaccine administration errors?
- 3) Can you identify which measures you should take when responding to vaccine administration errors?
- 4) Can you describe strategies that can help decrease vaccine administration errors?
- 5) Can you identify resources for proper vaccine administration?

## Resources *(Description, link, and source of information)*

This resource listing was developed as a collaboration of CDC, the American Nurses Association, the National Network of Immunization Nurses and Associates, and the Immunization Action Coalition. However, the opinions expressed are those of the individuals and do not constitute an endorsement from CDC or the other groups. CDC cannot endorse any weblinks or outside products. For questions, contact Susan Farrall at [sof3@cdc.gov](mailto:sof3@cdc.gov).

### **Vaccine Administration Recommendations and Guidelines**

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/vac-admin/default.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/vac-admin/default.htm)  
*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

### **Clinic Resources for Administering Vaccines**

[www.immunize.org/clinic/administering-vaccines.asp](http://www.immunize.org/clinic/administering-vaccines.asp)  
*Immunization Action Coalition*

### **Don't Be Guilty of These Errors in Vaccine Storage and Handling**

[www.immunize.org/catg.d/p3036.pdf](http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p3036.pdf)  
*Immunization Action Coalition*

### **EZIZ – Online Training for Administering Vaccines**

<http://eziz.org/eziz-training>  
*California Vaccines for Children Program*

### **Nurses and Immunizations**

[www.animmunize.org](http://www.animmunize.org)  
*American Nurses Association*