

VACCINES FOR CHILDREN



Dallas County
Health and Human Services

SUMMER 2020 - NEWSLETTER

NIAM

August is National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM). This annual observance highlights the efforts of Dallas County Health and Human Services to protect patients of all ages against vaccine-preventable diseases through on-time vaccination.

During NIAM, Dallas County Health and Human Services encourages you to ensure your patients are up to date on recommended vaccines. Research has consistently shown that healthcare professionals are the most trusted source of vaccine information for parents and patients.

CDC has also developed Medscape CME activities to help healthcare professionals have successful conversations with parents about vaccines. Access these CME activities at the links below:

- Making the Case: Championing for HPV Cancer Prevention in Your Practice: <https://www.medscape.org/viewarticle/898084>
- Pediatric Immunization: Navigating Difficult Conversations with Parents: <https://www.medscape.org/viewarticle/907254>

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Vaccination Recommendations during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Stay-at-home and shelter-in-place orders have resulted in declines in outpatient pediatric visits and fewer vaccine doses being administered, leaving children at risk for vaccine-preventable diseases. As states develop plans for reopening, healthcare providers are encouraged to work with families to keep or bring children up to date with their vaccinations. Primary care practices in communities affected by COVID-19 should continue to use strategies to separate well visits from sick visits. Examples could include:

- Scheduling sick visits and well-child visits during different times of the day
- Reducing crowding in waiting rooms, by asking patients to remain outside (e.g., stay in their vehicles, if applicable) until they are called into the facility for their appointment, or setting up triage booths to screen patients safely
- Collaborating with healthcare providers in the community to identify separate locations for providing well visits for children

Healthcare providers should identify children who have missed well-child visits and/or recommended vaccinations and contact them to schedule in person appointments, starting with newborns, infants up to 24 months, young children and extending through adolescence. State-based immunization information systems and electronic health records may be able to support this work.

All newborns should be seen by a pediatric healthcare provider shortly after hospital discharge (3 to 5 days of age). Ideally, newborn visits should be done in person during the COVID-19 pandemic in order to evaluate for dehydration and jaundice, ensure all components of newborn screening were completed and appropriate confirmatory testing and follow-up is arranged, and evaluate mothers for postpartum depression. Developmental surveillance and early childhood screenings, including developmental and autism screening, should continue along with referrals for early intervention services and further evaluation if concerns are identified.

Administering Flu Vaccines During the COVID-19 Pandemic

CDC has released interim guidance intended to help immunization providers safely administer vaccines during the COVID-19 pandemic. Routine vaccination during the COVID-19 pandemic is essential for protecting people and communities from vaccine-preventable diseases and outbreaks, including flu. This guidance will be reassessed and updated based on the evolving epidemiology of COVID-19 in the U.S.



Who Should Get Their Flu Vaccine During the COVID-19 Pandemic?

Annual flu vaccination is recommended for everyone 6 months of age and older, with rare exceptions, to decrease flu illnesses, hospitalizations and deaths. Health care providers should use every opportunity during flu season to give flu vaccines to all eligible persons, including essential workers and persons at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19 or influenza.

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Preparing for COVID-19 Vaccination Efforts

If you are anticipating being part of vaccination effort when a COVID-19 vaccine is available and your organization is not yet enrolled in the Texas Immunization Registry (ImmTrac2), please register now to be ready. Click the link, <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunize/immtrac/forms.shtm> for instructions on how to register an organization not currently in the Registry. Providers can download publication #11-15175 "ImmTrac2 Site Registration Guide". To start a new site registration, providers can go here <https://immtrac.dshs.texas.gov/TXPRD/portalInfoManager.do> and click the REGISTRATION button on the menu bar near the top of the screen (see Registration Button below).



Be Ready for Hurricane Season



In the event of a natural disaster, power outage, or equipment failure, it is best to act instead of react. Before your area faces an emergency, you can be proactive by developing and maintaining a current Vaccine Management Plan. A Vaccine Management Plan is critical to identifying all emergency contacts, an alternative storage location, and a plan to preserve the vaccine cold-chain. Emergency contacts should include information on the Responsible Entity, the primary and backup vaccine coordinators, and the alternative storage facility. Each plan must have the name, phone number, and address of each emergency contact and includes information on preservation of the vaccine cold chain. To preserve the cold chain, each site must have a qualified transport container and calibrated data loggers that will be used if it is necessary to move the vaccine to an alternate storage unit. It is important to use appropriate equipment to reduce the risk of temperature excursions and ensure accurate temperature monitoring until the vaccine is successfully relocated.



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Back to School Vaccines

Although there is a lot of uncertainty regarding the upcoming school year, according to Texas law, all students, kindergarten through 12th grade, need to be up-to-date on their vaccines.

Please remember to get your child vaccinated before school starts. All children are required to be vaccinated in order to attend school or daycare. Students should be up-to-date, in the process of receiving vaccines, or have a valid exemption on file when school starts in the fall. The 2020-2021 vaccine requirements are located on the Forms and Publications-School

Immunizations webpage at <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunize/school/default.shtm>



Expired 2019-2020 Influenza Vaccine

Influenza doses expired on June 30 (some may have expired earlier). Once doses expire, a Vaccine Loss Report (VLR) must be completed within the Electronic Vaccine Inventory (EVI) system to begin the return process. EVI must generate the VLR within four days of the expiration of the vaccine (TVFC Provider Manual pg. 48). Upon completion of the VLR, a loss label is created which providers receive via email. Upon receipt of the loss label, ensure the expired vaccine is shipped in a timely manner.



DSHS Immunization Newsletter Subscriptions

<https://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/Immunization-News/The-TVFC/ASN-Digest/>
<https://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/Immunization-News/The-Upshot/>

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Parts or full contents used within this newsletter were extracted from the publications of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Texas Department of State Health Services website.



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