

Please Continue Vaccinating Patients during COVID-19 Pandemic

The Washington Department of Health encourages health care providers to continue vaccinating patients, especially infants, pregnant women and older adults, who are at higher risk of getting diseases that vaccines can prevent. Slowing or stopping access to immunizations increases our risk to outbreaks of other diseases.

Things for health care providers to consider:

- Risks to patients around possible exposure to COVID-19 when they come in for vaccinations and well child visits.
- Strategies in clinic operations to mitigate these risks.
- Local level of COVID-19 illnesses and how many sick patients come to your clinic.

Because of personal, practice or community circumstances related to COVID-19, some providers may not be able to provide well child visits, including provision of immunizations, for all patients in their practice. **If a practice can provide only limited well child visits, health care providers are encouraged to prioritize newborn care and vaccination of infants and young children (through 24 months of age) when possible.**

Ways to safely give vaccines while protecting patients and staff:

- Limit well visits to early morning and use the rest of the day for sick visits.
- Dedicate specific clinics, buildings, or rooms for sick visits and for well visits.
- Conduct well visits for newborns, and for infants and younger children who require immunizations and reschedule well visits for older children at a later date.
- Lower the number of patients on site at any one time. Think about closing a waiting room or registration area and have patients check in by phone from the parking lot.
- Consider different entrances in your clinic for sick and well patients.
- Clearly mark entrances for patients who are high risk for COVID-19.
- Tell patients who are ill to use telemedicine or a phone call. Some chronic conditions may be safely managed by a phone consult or telemedicine visit.
- Exam patients by car visit. Tell patients to drive to the clinic and wait in their car while staff go outside to check on them.
- Administer vaccines to people in their car.
- Screen all patients and caregivers for high-risk symptoms.

Keep Vaccinating Pregnant Women on Schedule during the Pandemic

It is safe and recommended to continue giving flu and Tdap vaccinations to pregnant women during the COVID-19 outbreak. These vaccines protect them from serious diseases that can affect both them and their baby. This practice is supported by the CDC and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

We know clinics in many communities have had to reduce the number of routine preventive care visits they offer to adhere to social distancing guidelines. But routine adult vaccinations, including vaccinations during pregnancy, can be given as recommended if a patient comes in for another reason. Flu vaccine can be given at any visit during the pregnancy, and Tdap can be given between 27 and 36 weeks of gestation.

ACOG offers more information about [supporting your pregnant patients during the COVID-19 outbreak](#).

Additional Resources for Providers:

- [What Healthcare Personnel Should Know about Caring for Patients with Confirmed or Possible COVID-19 Infection](#) (CDC)
- [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) in Healthcare Settings](#) (CDC)
- [Maintaining Childhood Immunizations During COVID-19 Pandemic](#) (CDC)
- [Guidance for administering vaccines when a child is sick](#) (CDC)
- [Delivery of adult preventive services, including immunizations](#) (CDC)
- [CDC Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) webpage](#)
- [Washington State Department of Health Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) webpage](#)
- [Washington State Coronavirus Response \(COVID-19\) webpage](#)

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