
It's Not Too Late to Vaccinate

By Julie Loomis, RN, JD

Last month, the CDC issued a letter to healthcare providers asking for help to ensure patients receive influenza vaccines **by the end of October**. The letter states "...To avoid missed opportunities for vaccination, providers should offer vaccination during routine health care visits and hospitalizations when the vaccine is available. Vaccination efforts should continue throughout the season because the duration of the influenza season varies and influenza activity might not occur in certain communities until February or March..." Flu vaccine risks are generally low, but the CDC reminds you to "know the site and get it right," to prevent shoulder injuries such as tendinitis or even deltoid bursitis, generally caused when vaccines are injected high on the shoulder and the needle enters a shoulder bursa. Train staff to use the correct syringe and needle and adhere to the "Five Rights"(right patient, right drug, right dose, right route, right time). Follow these safe injection practices for adults: maintain aseptic technique, perform hand hygiene, and use a new needle and syringe for each injection.. If using a single-dose vial, you must use it for only one patient and discard after use. The CDC also recommends drawing up vaccines only at the time of the administration.

Staff should be aware of precautions that can be taken to reduce the likelihood of fainting and falls after vaccine injections [here](#). Providers should have a medical emergency plan in place in the event of a severe acute vaccine reaction.

All vaccine providers, public or private, are required by the National Vaccine Childhood Injury Act to give the appropriate Vaccine Information Statements (VISs) to the patient (or parent or legal representative), regardless of the age of the recipient, prior to every dose of specific vaccines, including the influenza vaccine which is available [here](#). The VIS may be read or reviewed electronically by the patient/legal representative and the provider must offer a copy, but the recipient may decline.

Remember to report any clinically significant adverse event to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) [here](#).

For additional information the on VISs and proper vaccine administration, please see [this page](#). For information on vaccine storage and handling, visit [this page](#).

The contents of The Sentinel are intended for educational/informational purposes only and do not constitute legal advice. Policyholders are urged to consult with their personal attorney for legal advice, as specific legal requirements may vary from state to state and/or change over time.