The National Vaccine Advisory Committee (NVAC) Standards for Child and Adolescent Immunization Practices represent the most desirable immunization practices, which pediatricians should strive to achieve. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) endorses the NVAC Standards and encourages pediatricians to fully implement the recommendations. In an effort to address implementation challenges, the AAP Childhood Immunization Support Program collects best practices from pediatric offices and shares them for adoption in your office!

NVAC Standard #5 states that:

**Health care professionals review the vaccination and health status of patients at every encounter to determine which vaccines are indicated.**

Health care professionals should review the vaccination status of all patients at all health care visits to minimize the number of missed opportunities to vaccinate. This review should determine whether the patient has received any vaccinations elsewhere or is at high risk for disease or undervaccination. This information should be documented in the patient’s chart and preventive health summary. Health care professionals who do not offer vaccinations should refer patients to a primary care provider for needed vaccinations.

NVAC Standard #6 states that:

**Health care professionals assess for and follow only medically accepted contraindications.**

Withholding vaccinations because of medical concerns that are not contraindications results in missed opportunities for prevention. Health care professionals should ask about any condition or circumstance that might indicate that a vaccination should be withheld or delayed and about previous adverse events temporally associated with any vaccination. Health care professionals should support their decisions about what constitutes a contraindication or deferral for each vaccine by consulting the Guide to Vaccine Contraindications and Precautions published by the CDC (available at: [http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/vac-admin/downloads/contraindications-guide-508.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/vac-admin/downloads/contraindications-guide-508.pdf)); the harmonized recommendations of the ACIP, the AAP, and the AAFP (available at: [http://www.cdc.gov/nip/recs/child-schedule.htm#Printable](http://www.cdc.gov/nip/recs/child-schedule.htm#Printable)); the AAP’s Red Book and other relevant recommendations; Vaccine Information Statements; and manufacturers’ package inserts. Contraindications and deferrals should be documented in the medical chart.
Pediatric Implementation Strategies:

Assess Office-based Immunization Rates Annually
- If you are a Vaccines for Children (VFC) provider, the VFC Assessment-Feedback-Incentives-eXchange (AFIX) will determine your rates at least once every 3 to 4 years.
- Even though AFIX assesses every 3 to 4 years, NVAC calls for practices to assess immunization rates annually. Consider using the Comprehensive Clinic Assessment Software Application (CoCASA), available from the CDC. CoCASA is a tool for assessing immunization practices within a clinic, private practice, or any other environment where immunizations are provided.
- The AAP Education in Quality Improvement for Pediatric Practices (EQIPP) is another tool that pediatricians can use to measure rates in their practices and implement a quality improvement intervention.

Maintain a Centralized Vaccination Record at the Practice to Easily Assess the Vaccine Status of Every Child at Every Visit
- Designate Immunization Champions who help remind office staff to check immunization status of every child at every visit.
- Obtain records of immunizations given by other providers.
- Prominently display vaccine records so they are easily found in the chart. The AAP Bookstore has a vaccine administration record available for purchase.
- Provide parents with a portable record and encourage them to carry it with them at all times.
- Actively participate in an immunization registry when practical in order to have access to the most complete immunization records for a child.

Address How the Practice Can Minimize Missed Opportunities
- Create office procedures to check vaccine status and administer vaccinations at acute care visits.
- Review valid contraindications. Some commonly cited reasons for non-vaccination are not true contraindications; many are not even precautions. Invalid contraindications include: mild illness, antibiotic therapy, pregnancy in the household, breastfeeding, and premature birth.
- Keep track of children who do not receive vaccinations due to valid contraindications or vaccine delays/shortages. Send reminders to parents when the prior reason for non-vaccination is resolved.
- Use the recommended Catch-up Schedule for children who have missed or delayed immunizations. This makes it easier for staff to determine who needs which vaccines and has been proved to get children up-to-date faster.

Resources:

AAP
- Immunization Training Guide
  http://www2.aap.org/immunization/pediatricians/trainingguide.html
- CISP Immunization Quality Improvement Web Site
  http://www2.aap.org/immunization/pediatricians/qualityimprovement.html
- CISP Immunization Registries Fact Sheet
  http://www2.aap.org/immunization/pediatricians/pdf/RegistriesFactSheet.pdf
- AAP/CISP Immunization in a Medical Home Training Tool
  www2.aap.org/immunization/pediatricians/ImmunizationTrainingTool.ppt.
- Recommended Childhood and Adolescent Immunization Schedule and Catch-up Schedule
  http://www2.aap.org/immunization/IZSchedule.html
- Red Book Online
  http://aapredbook.aappublications.org/
- Vaccine Administration Record and Screening Forms
CDC

- CDC Guide to Contraindications
  http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/vac-admin/contraindications.htm

- General Recommendations on Immunization, Epidemiology and Prevention of Vaccine-Preventable Diseases
  http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/ed/epivac/default.htm

- Providers and Immunization Information Systems
  http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/iis/index.html

- Vaccine Information Statements
  http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/default.htm

Further Reading:


- Wong CA, Taylor JA, Wright JA, Opel DJ, Katzenellenbogen RA.

Other installments in this series can be found on the Childhood Immunization Support Program Web site at:
http://www2.aap.org/immunization/pediatricians/nvacstandards.html

Please send your ideas on cost-effective and sustainable practices to cispimmunize@aap.org.