



Vaccine Preventable Diseases and Back to School

Vaccination requirements for daycare and school entry are essential tools for maintaining high vaccination coverage rates, and, in turn, lower rates of vaccine-preventable diseases. Resources are available on how to safely resume routine vaccination during the COVID-19 pandemic <http://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/page/3955>.

Universal vaccination is a critical component of quality healthcare and should be accomplished through routine and catch-up vaccination. Healthcare providers should administer as vaccine doses as indicated on the Recommended Immunization Schedules for Persons Aged 0 Through 18 Years <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/index.html>.

Educate All Office Staff

Provide training to staff, including front desk/scheduling employees, on evidence-based communication strategies known to improve vaccine confidence. Ensure all staff is comfortable addressing questions on immunizations and advocating for all recommended vaccinations at every visit. Designate someone to screen all immunization records before the patient is seen. Immunization training resources are available at <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/ed/courses.html>.

Provide a Strong Recommendation

Parents consider their child's healthcare professionals to be their most trusted source of information when it comes to vaccines. All office staff play a crucial role in establishing and maintaining a commitment to effective communication about vaccines and the maintenance of high vaccination rates. Learn more about making a presumptive recommendation and responding to questions at <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/conversations/talking-with-parents.html>.

Utilize Provider Prompts

Provider prompts typically consist of electronic prompts in electronic health records (EHR) or manually added notes/flags in paper charts. Most provider prompts are automatic pop-up alerts to notify the viewer that the patient is due or overdue for an immunization. Many EHRs have provider prompts pre-installed that can be customized to your office.

Patient Reminder-Recall

Immunization reminder-recall systems are methods to identify and notify families whose children are due for vaccines (reminder) or are behind schedule (recall). Office staff pull a list of patients who are due or overdue for immunizations and then contact them to schedule a visit. The Louisiana Immunization Network (LINKS) and many EHRs can generate such reports easily if immunization records and family contact information are updated at every visit. Reminder/recall methods include:

- Phone calls by office staff (calls placed by office staff tend to be more effective than auto-dialer calls, but often cost more).
- Auto-dialers (auto-dialers automatically dial phone numbers and either play a recorded message or connect the call to a live person).
- Mail reminder cards or letters (your EHR may print these for you).

- Text messages (send text messages to both parents and adolescents, so adolescents are included in the discussion of their own care).

The following is a list of some auto-dialer vendors. Please note that we cannot endorse or recommend specific products or brands.

Auto-dialer	Website
Call-em-all	https://www.call-em-all.com/
Call Fire	http://www.callfire.com
Televox/West	http://www.televox.com/appointment-reminders/
Voicent	http://www.voicent.com/autodialers.php

For more information, visit:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/reminder-sys.htm or the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) https://www.aap.org/en-us/Documents/immunization_reminderrecall.pdf

Patient Portals

Many EHR systems come with a patient portal option. Practices can use this feature to send emails to patients or parents, prompting them to check their patient portal, which will remind them of vaccinations that are due. For more information, visit: <https://www.aap.org/en-us/professional-resources/practice-transformation/managing-patients/Pages/patient-portals-emails.aspx>.

Hold Vaccine Clinics at Hours that are Convenient for Families

Holding vaccination clinics with special hours (evenings or weekends) allows for those families with busy schedules to access vaccination services.

And ALWAYS Flu Vaccination, too

Last flu season was early and intense, with school-aged children being most impacted. In recent years, Louisiana ranked among the lowest in the nation for statewide flu vaccination coverage. Providers should encourage all patients six months of age and older to receive the flu vaccine, which can:

- Reduce the risk of flu illness and serious flu outcomes like hospitalization, ICU admission or even death.
- Prevent millions of illnesses, tens of thousands of hospitalizations, and thousands of deaths every year (nationally).
- Make illness less severe if children do get sick.

Suggested Tools:

Talking with Parents about Vaccines for Infants
<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/conversations/downloads/talk-infants-508.pdf>

Preparing for Questions Parents May Ask about Vaccines
<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/conversations/preparing-for-parent-vaccine-questions.html>