



INFORMATION FOR NURSES

RCN signpost guide: nurse-led immunisation of school-aged children



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Signpost guide for nurse-led immunisation of school-aged children

“To practice competently, you must possess the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for, safe, and effective practice without direct supervision. You must acknowledge the limits of your professional competence, and only undertake practice and accept responsibilities for those activities in which you are competent” (6.2).

Nursing & Midwifery Council *Code of professional conduct* (2002)

Introduction

Nurses working with young people need to keep up-to-date with fast changing legislation, policy, and practice. This short document is a signpost for you to access appropriate websites and documents for the latest information on immunisation.

One of the best places to start your information search is the Department of Health website at www.dh.gov.uk

Application of knowledge to practice

Immunisation is a safe and highly effective method of preventing disease. Successful immunisation depends on:

- ◆ production of a safe and effective vaccine
- ◆ maintenance of the cold chain during vaccine transportation and storage
- ◆ injection into the correct anatomical site and an appropriate recipient
- ◆ correct injection technique.

Shire Hall Communications (2001) *UK guidance on best practice in vaccine administration*, London: Shire Hall. This can be downloaded from the RCN website

www.rcn.org.uk/publications

Department of Health (1996) *Immunisation against infectious disease – the green book*, London: DH.

www.dh.gov.uk

Nursing & Midwifery Council (2002) *Code of professional conduct*, London: NMC.

www.nmc-org.uk

Nursing & Midwifery Council (2002) *Guidelines for administration of medicines*, London: NMC.

www.nmc-org.uk

Health Promotion England/Department of Health

www.immunisation.nhs.uk

Nursing & Midwifery Council (2004)
Guidelines for records and record keeping,
London: NMC.

www.nmc-org.uk

RCN, RCPCH, RCGP and CPHVA (2002)
Position statement on injection technique,
London: RCN. Publication code 001 753.

www.rcn.org.uk/publications

Policies and protocols

Protocols are formal written guidance that is agreed between professionals. They are derived from practice policies, and provide guidance to individual nurses and teams. You must follow local protocols and policies, as well as adhere to national practice procedures.

Department of Health (1996) *Immunisation against infectious disease – the green book*, London: DH.

www.dh.gov.uk

Shire Hall Communications (2001) *UK guidance on best practice in vaccine administration*, London: Shire Hall. This can be downloaded from the RCN website

www.rcn.org.uk/resources/guidelines.php

Patient group directions

Patient group directions (PGDs) are written agreements for the supply and administration of medicines to groups of patients who may not be individually known before they present for treatment. The RCN believes that PGDs are helpful to nurses because they support the advance of quality patient care.

PGDs are a statutory instrument and are legally binding. They should be individually negotiated between the nurse and the employer. PGDs also have to be signed by a doctor and pharmacist, and meet specific criteria. If you want to find out more about using PGDs, the RCN has produced the following guidance:

Royal College of Nursing (updated 2004)
Patient group directions: guidance and information for nurses, London: RCN.
Publication code 001 370.

www.rcn.org.uk

Consent

The legal position on consent by young people under 16 years-of-age was settled in the case of Gillick versus West Norfolk and Wisbech Area Health Authority in 1985. The House of Lords clearly stated that even if a child is under 16, she or he might be able to give consent to medical treatment providing that they have sufficient understanding of the proposed procedure. The 1985 Fraser guidelines identified doctors as key to this process, and it is now accepted practice to extend this to other health care professionals such as nurses.

Under Scottish law, young people aged 16 and over have the same right to consent or refuse treatment as adults.

Before a patient can make their decision, they need to have a clear explanation and an opportunity to ask you questions about the:

- ◆ need for vaccination

- ◆ vaccine and number of doses required
- ◆ risks associated with the disease the patient is being immunised against
- ◆ risks and side-effects associated with the vaccine.

Department of Health (2001) *Twelve key points on consent: the law in England*, London: DH.

www.dh.gov.uk

General Medical Council (1998) *Seeking patient consent: the ethical considerations*, London: GMC.

www.gmc-uk.org/standards/consent

Competence

When you administer a vaccination you must ensure that your practice is safe, and an effective standard of clinical practice is achieved. In agreeing to undertake vaccination, you assume professional accountability and should ensure that you keep up-to-date with all aspects of immunisation outlined by the NMC.

Nursing & Midwifery Council (2002) *Guidelines for administration of medicines*, London: NMC.

www.nmc-org.uk

Local practice protocols and training

You should ensure that your local practice protocols and training address the following:

- ◆ patient group directions
- ◆ ordering and storage of vaccine
- ◆ maintenance of cold chain
- ◆ evidence base
- ◆ consent
- ◆ knowledge skills framework to assess clinical competency
- ◆ risk assessment of environment and procedures
- ◆ documentation and record keeping.

Shire Hall Communications (2001) *UK guidance on best practice in vaccine administration*, London: Shire Hall. This can be downloaded from the RCN website

www.rcn.org.uk/resources/guidelines.php

Environment

As the named nurse you will work in partnership with an identified link person from where the vaccination is to be administered. Together you will assess and plan the environment in which the immunisation session will be carried out. In doing this you should consider:

- ◆ access to telephone
- ◆ access to hand washing facilities
- ◆ privacy
- ◆ first aid and emergency support
- ◆ local health and safety policy.

You should also look at the management of:

- ◆ adverse reaction
- ◆ adverse incident handling
- ◆ needle-stick injury issues
- ◆ safe disposal of sharps and clinical waste
- ◆ updating patient records.

Shire Hall Communications (2001) *UK guidance on best practice in vaccine administration*, London: Shire Hall. This can be downloaded from the RCN website

www.rcn.org.uk/resources/guidelines.php

Department of Health (1996) *Immunisation against infectious disease – the green book*, London: DH.

www.dh.gov.uk

Recording

You should record details of all vaccinations in accordance with national and local guidelines, including:

- ◆ date administered
- ◆ vaccine manufacturer
- ◆ lot batch number and vaccine expiry date
- ◆ dose administered
- ◆ route/site
- ◆ signed by nurse and name printed.

Nursing & Midwifery Council (2004) *Guidelines for records and record keeping*, London: NMC.

www.nmc-org.uk

Clinical governance

Clinical governance is an umbrella term for everything that helps to maintain and improve high standards of patient care. This includes clinical audit, which is a way of reviewing health care delivery and allowing clinical staff to review practice continually. You will find the type of audit process used is defined in local policies.

Royal College of Nursing (2003) *Clinical governance: an RCN resource guide*, London: RCN. Publication code 002 036.

www.rcn.org.uk

Further information

Government and NHS resources

NHS Direct

0845 46 47

www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

Health Protection Agency now incorporates the **Public Health Laboratory Service:**

020 7339 1300

www.hpa.org.uk

www.phls.co.uk

England

Department of Health

www.dh.gov.uk

Health Promotion England (HPE)

HPE has been taken over by the Department of Health. You can find information about the immunisation issues that HPE covered at the following NHS website:

www.immunisation.nhs.uk

Northern Ireland

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

028 90520500

www.dhsspsni.gov.uk

Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland

028 9031 1611

www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk

Scotland

Scottish Centre for Infection and Environmental Health

0141 300 1100

www.show.scot.nhs.uk/scieh

TRAVAX

www.travax.scot.nhs.uk

Health Education Board for Scotland

0131 536 5500

www.hebs.com

Wales

Department of Health

029 20 825111

www.wales.gov.uk/subihealth

Public Health Division for the National Assembly for Wales

029 20 825111

www.word.wales.gov.uk



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