Before you start

• Ensure the immunisation appointment time is allocated for vaccinations, the average GP nursing time is 10-15 minutes. We recommend best practice in a minimum of 20 minutes. However you may want to consider the number of vaccines required and when in the schedule the child is often affecting appointment time.

• Consider other factors in deciding the time required for appointments. For example, explaining the vaccination or the presence of interpreter.

• Consider running the clinic with support from a registered or non-registered colleague for help supervising siblings. However, you are always responsible for your own documentation and contemporaneous record keeping is essential.

• Ensure you are up to date with immunisation training, including anaphylaxis.

• Make sure you have access to the relevant chapters of the Green Book and have the up to date PGD and this has been appropriately authorised and signed.

• Always have a current immunisation schedule available for reference.

• Remember the 8 Rs.

• Remember the 8 Rs.

• Ensure there is the ability to safely dispose of used sharps at the point of use.

• Check eligibility for the vaccines and any contraindications.

• Confirm the vaccinations that the child is attending for and in the presence of other siblings identify the correct child with a sticker if needed.

• For children outside of the national schedule refer to the flowchart for individuals with uncertain vaccination status or your local health protection team or screening and immunisation team where there are doubts.

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• If a vaccination error does occur, stay calm; explain what has happened and be open and honest with the parent/guardian.

• Obtain immediate advice from your supporting clinician and seek advice from your local immunisation team on an action plan/next steps.

• Generally, reassurance can be given that no immediate harm will come to the patient but vaccination with the correct vaccine will be required.

• Reporting errors is an important way of reflecting on what went wrong and preventing further vaccination errors.

Top tips

• Top tips

• References

Resources

Further resources and country specific information can be found on the forum web page at www.rcn.org.uk/ get-involved/forums/general-practice-nursing-forum

• www.nmc.org.uk/standards/code

• www.gov.uk/government/publications/maternity-immunisation-schedule


• www.gov.uk/government/publications/routine-childhood-immunisation-schedule


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www.gov.uk/government/publications/maternity-skills-immunisation-schedule


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Immunizations programs in the UK are one of the most successful public health strategies that are delivered by general practice nurses. The current UK childhood immunization programme has increasingly become more complex over the past decade. Children are scheduled to receive between 18-20 immunizations before their 18th birthday.

Evidence from the National Patient Safety Agency has shown that immunization related errors form the largest part of serious adverse events in general practice. This best practice resource aims to provide a practical checklist to support the general practice nurse in managing a childhood vaccine and immunisation clinic.

Common vaccination errors

Vaccine administration errors due to:
- vaccines with similar sounding names
- vaccines with similar looking packaging
- expired vaccinations remaining in fridge
- reconstitution errors
- vaccines given at the wrong time of the schedule
- vaccines given out of cold chain or incorrectly stored
- records of child not up to date, inaccurate, unclear, unavailable leading to either too many or too few vaccinations being administered
- vaccination errors in vulnerable groups such as the looked after child due to lack of accurate patient information.

Common vaccination errors

Vaccines must be stored at temperatures between 2-80C.

Plan vaccine ordering ahead to ensure sufficient stock for the next 2-4 weeks.

Do not over stock the vaccine fridge.

Follow your local policy on the management of vaccination fridges and cold chain protocol.

Segregate vaccines within the vaccine fridge into childhood, adult and travel vaccinations. If possible have separate fridge for childhood vaccines.

Arrange childhood immunisations within the fridge in line with the vaccination schedules.

Before giving a vaccine always check:
- that the correct vaccine has been taken from the fridge.
- that the vaccine accompanies the accompanying adult.
- check expiry date.
- ensure it is correctly reconstituted in accordance with the manufacturers guidelines.
- do not draw up the vaccine prior to the consultation.

Vaccination ordering storage

- Plan vaccination ordering ahead to ensure sufficient vaccine stock for the next 2-4 weeks.
- Do not over stock the vaccine fridge.
- Follow your local policy on the management of vaccination fridges and cold chain protocol.
- Segregate vaccines within the vaccine fridge into childhood, adult and travel vaccinations. If possible have separate fridge for childhood vaccines.
- Arrange childhood immunisations within the fridge in line with the vaccination schedules.

Vaccination

- vaccination errors in vulnerable groups such as the looked after child due to lack of accurate patient information.

Core areas of immunisation knowledge

- The aims of the immunisation programme and policy.
- The immunisation schedule and how vaccines work.
- Vaccine preventable diseases
- The different types of vaccines, their composition and indications and contraindications.
- Current vaccination policies.
- Communicating with patients, parents and carers.
- Local issues in immunisation.
- Storage and handling of vaccines.
- Correct administration.
- Anaphylaxis and adverse reactions.
- Documentation, record keeping and reporting.
- Strategies for optimizing immunisation uptake.

Vacination ordering storage

- Insufficient appointment time allocated for vaccinations can lead to:
  - confusion between siblings can result in the wrong child being vaccinated
  - limited time to gain information regarding immunisations for immunosuppressed children leading to delays in vaccination or contraindicated immunisations
  - miscommunication between parents/guardians and GP/Nurse leading to too many or too few vaccinations being administered
  - underutilisation of grandparent or older child leading to demand for children to be double-vaccinated

Remember your 8 Rs

8 Rs

- Right patient
- Right vaccine and diluent (where applicable)
- Right to give (ie, no contraindications)
- Right time (including correct age and interval, as well as before the product expiration date)
- Right dose
- Right route (including correct needle gauge and length and technique)
- Right site
- Right documentation (to ascertain what the patient has already had/needs)
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  - Reconstitution errors
  - Vaccines given at the wrong time of the schedule
  - Vaccines given out of cold chain or incorrectly stored
  - Records of child not up to date, inaccurate, unclear, unavailable leading to either too many or too few vaccinations being administered
  - Vaccination errors in vulnerable groups such as the looked after child due to lack of accurate patient information.

Vaccination ordering storage

- Place vaccine ordering chart on wall near the fridge so it is visible.
- Do not store the vaccine fridge. Ensure it is accessible to all practitioners involved in vaccination.
- Ensure all practitioners involved in vaccination are aware of how to use the ordering chart.
- Vaccines must be stored at temperatures between 2-8°C.

All practitioners involved in immunisation should discuss patient immunisation status, contraindications, knowledge and understanding in the areas listed below.

- Core areas of immunisation knowledge
  - The aims of immunisation, national vaccine policy and schedule.
  - The importance of vaccination and how vaccines work.
  - Vaccine preventable diseases.
  - The different types of vaccines, their composition and indications and contraindications.
  - Current vaccination schedule.
  - Communicating with patients, parents and carers.
  - Local issues in immunisation.
  - Storage and handling of vaccines.
  - Correct administration.
  - Amphotericin and adjuvant vaccines.
  - Documentation, record keeping and reporting.
  - Strategies for optimising immunisation uptake.

Vaccination programmes in the UK are one of the most successful public health strategies that are delivered by general practice nurses. The current UK childhood immunisation programme has increasingly become more complex over the past decade. Children are scheduled to receive between 18-20 immunisations before their 18th birthday.

Evidence from the National Patient Safety Agency has shown that immunisation related errors form the largest part of serious adverse events in general practice. This best practice resource aims to provide a practical checklist to support the general practice nurse in managing a childhood vaccine and immunisation clinic.

Before giving a vaccine always check:

- Right patient
- Right vaccine and diluent (where applicable)
- Right to give (ie, no contraindications)
- Right time (including correct age and interval, as well as before the product expiration date)
- Right dose
- Right route (including correct needle gauge and length and technique)
- Right site
- Right documentation (to ascertain what the patient has already had/needs)

2-8°C

Vaccines must be stored at temperatures between 2-8°C.
Plan vaccine ordering ahead to ensure sufficient stock for the next 2-4 weeks.

Do not over stock the vaccine fridge.

Follow your local policy on the management of vaccination fridges and cold chain protocol.

Segregate vaccines within the vaccine fridge into childhood, adult and travel vaccinations. If possible have separate fridge for childhood vaccines.

Arrange childhood immunisations within the fridge in line with the vaccination schedule.

Vaccines must be stored at temperatures between 2-8°C.

**Common vaccination errors**

- Confusion between siblings can result in the wrong child being vaccinated.
- Limited time to gain information regarding immunisations for immunosuppressed children leading to delays in vaccination or contraindicated vaccinations.
- Miscommunication between parents/guardians and GPN particularly in patients with limited English language skills.
- Little time to investigate children with uncertain or incomplete vaccination history.

**Vaccination errors due to:**

- Vaccines with similar sounding names
- Vaccines with similar looking packaging
- Expiration vaccinations remaining in fridge
- Reconstitution errors
- Vaccines given at the wrong time of the schedule
- Vaccines given out of chain or incorrectly stored
- Records of child not up to date, inaccurate, unclear, unavailable leading to either too many or too few vaccinations being administered
- Vaccination errors in vulnerable groups such as the looked after child due to lack of accurate patient information.

**Preparation of the vaccine**

1. Check the current vaccine has been taken from the fridge in time.
2. Review the vaccine and diluent (where applicable).
3. Check expiry date.
4. Ensure it is correctly reconstituted in accordance with the manufacturers guidelines.
5. Do not draw up the vaccine prior to the consultation.

**Remember your 8 Rs**

- Right patient
- Right vaccine and diluent (where applicable)
- Right to give (ie, no contraindications)
- Right time (including correct age and interval, as well as before the product expiration date)
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- Right route (including correct needle gauge and length and technique)
- Right site
- Right documentation (to ascertain what the patient has already had/needs)

**Vaccination ordering storage**

- Plan vaccination ordering to ensure maintenance of cold chain for a week.
- Do not over stock the vaccine fridge.
- Follow your local policy on the management of vaccination fridges and cold chain protocol.
- Segregate vaccines within the vaccine fridge into childhood, adult and travel vaccinations. If possible have separate fridge for childhood vaccines.
- Arrange childhood immunisations within the fridge in line with the vaccination schedule.

**Immunisation programmes in the UK are one of the most successful public health strategies that are delivered by general practice nurses.**

The current UK childhood immunisation programme has undergone many changes over the past decade. Children are scheduled to receive 18–21 immunisations before their 18th birthday.

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Common vaccination errors

- Incorrect appointment time
- Insufficient vaccine ordering ahead to ensure sufficient stock for the next 2-4 weeks.
- Do not over stock the vaccine fridge.
- Follow your local policy on the management of vaccination fridges and cold chain protocol.
- Segregate vaccines within the vaccine fridge into childhood, adult and travel vaccinations. If possible have separate fridge for childhood vaccines.
- Arrange childhood immunisations within the fridge in line with the vaccination schedules.

Common vaccination errors due to:

- Vaccines must be stored at temperatures between 2-8°C.

Vaccination ordering storage

- Place vaccination ordering ahead to ensure sufficient stock for the next 2-4 weeks.
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Vaccine administration errors due to:

- Check the correct vaccine has been taken from the fridge.
- Check the vaccine with the accompanying adult.
- Check expiry date.
- Ensure it is correctly reconstituted in accordance with the manufacturers guidelines.
- Do not draw up the vaccine prior to the consultation.

Before giving a vaccine always check:

- Right patient
- Right vaccine and diluent (where applicable)
- Right to give (ie, no contraindications)
- Right time (including correct age and interval, as well as before the product expiration date)
- Right dose
- Right route (including correct needle gauge and length and technique)
- Right site
- Right documentation (to ascertain what the patient has already had/needs)

Inefficient appointment time

- Vaccines with similar sounding names
- Vaccines with similar looking packaging
- Expired vaccinations remaining in fridge
- Reconstitution errors
- Vaccines given at the wrong time of the schedule
- Vaccines given out of chain or incorrectly stored
- Records of child not up to date, inaccurate, unclear, unavailable leading to either too many or too few vaccinations being administered
- Vaccination errors in vulnerable groups such as the looked after child due to lack of accurate patient information.

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Core areas of immunisation knowledge
- The aims of immunisation, national vaccine policy and schedules.
- The immune response to vaccines and how vaccines work.
- Vaccine preventable diseases.
- The different types of vaccines, their components and indications and contraindications.
- Current immunisation schedule.
- Communicating with patients, parents and carers.
- Legal issues in immunisation.
- Storage and handling of vaccines.
- Current advances in virology:
- Amphotericin and adjuvants.
- Documentation, record keeping and reporting.
- Strategies for optimising immunisation uptake.

Inefficient appointment time for vaccinations can lead to:
- confusion between siblings can result in the wrong child being vaccinated
- limited time to gain information regarding immunisations for immunosuppressed children leading to delays in vaccination or vaccination with incorrect information
- immunisation between parents/ guardians and current childhood immunisation
- limited English language skills
- difficulty in investigating children with uncertain or incomplete vaccination history.

Common vaccination errors

Before giving a vaccine always check:

1. Right patient
2. Right vaccine and diluent (where applicable)
3. Right to give (ie, no contraindications)
4. Right time (including correct age and interval, as well as before the product expiration date)
5. Right dose
6. Right route (including correct needle gauge and length and technique)
7. Right site
8. Right documentation (to ascertain what the patient has already had/needs)

Remember your 8 Rs

Preparing the vaccine

- Check the correct vaccine has been taken from the fridge
- Check the vaccine with the accompanying adult
- Check expiry date
- Do not give the vaccine if it has not been properly reconstituted in accordance with the manufacturers guidelines
- Do not give the vaccine prior to the consultation

Vaccination ordering storage

- Plan vaccine ordering ahead to ensure sufficient stock for the next 2-4 weeks.
- Do not over stock the vaccine fridge.
- Follow your local policy on the management of vaccination fridges and cold chain protocol.
- Segregate vaccines within the vaccine fridge into childhood, adult and travel vaccinations. If possible have separate fridge for childhood vaccines.
- Arrange childhood immunisations within the fridge in line with the vaccination schedule.

Vaccines must be stored at temperatures between 2-8°C.

Common vaccination errors

Vaccine administration errors due to:
- Incorrect documentation
- Inappropriate labelling or administration of vaccine (e.g., subcutaneous instead of intramuscular injection)
- Wrong dose
- Wrong site (i.e., incorrect depth of injection)
- Wrong route (e.g., intramuscular instead of subcutaneous)
- Wrong time (e.g., vaccinating before the product expiration date)
- Right dose
- Right route (including correct needle gauge and length and technique)
- Right site
- Right documentation (to ascertain what the patient has already had/needs)

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Common vaccination errors

- Inefficient appointment times: vaccine administration can lead to confusion in the minds of the patient and vaccination.

Vaccine administration errors due to: vaccination in the wrong child, delay in reconstitution, expired vaccines, incorrect administration, incorrect dosage, incorrect route, inadequate documentation.

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Remember your 8 Rs

All practitioners involved in immunisation should be aware of immunisation errors.

- Right patient
- Right vaccine and diluent (where applicable)
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- Right time (including correct age and interval, as well as before the product expiration date)
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- Inefficient appointment times: vaccine administration can lead to confusion in the minds of the patient and vaccination.

Vaccine administration errors due to: vaccination in the wrong child, delay in reconstitution, expired vaccines, incorrect administration, incorrect dosage, incorrect route, inadequate documentation.

Vaccination ordering storage

- Plan twice-weekly vaccine ordering to ensure maximum use and prevent waste.
- Do not overstock the vaccine fridge.
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- Arrange childhood immunisations within the fridge in line with the vaccination schedules.

Vaccines must be stored at temperatures between 2-8°C.

Vaccination ordering storage

- Plan twice-weekly vaccine ordering to ensure maximum use and prevent waste.
- Do not overstock the vaccine fridge.
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Immunisation programmes in the UK are one of the most successful public health strategies that are delivered by general practice nurses. The current UK childhood immunisation programme has increasingly become more complex over the past decade. Children are scheduled to receive between 18-20 immunisations before their 18th birthday. Evidence from the National Patient Safety Agency has shown that immunisation related errors form the largest part of serious adverse events in general practice. This best practice resource aims to provide a practical checklist to support the general practice nurse in managing a childhood vaccine and immunisation clinic.

Common vaccination errors

Common mistakes made in immunisation include:
- Misidentifying children
- Inaccurate record keeping
- Giving vaccinations outside of recommended schedules
- Inadequate documentation of vaccination history

Vaccines must be stored at temperatures between 2-8°C. Immunisation ordering storage

- Plan vaccine ordering ahead to ensure sufficient stock for the next 2-4 weeks.
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Managing Childhood Immunisation Clinics

- Ensure the appointment time is allocated for vaccinations, the average GPS appointment is 10 minutes. If you are running a recommended best practice in a minimum of 15 minutes; however you may want to consider the number of vaccines required and where in the schedule the child is often allocating sufficient appointment time.

- Consider other factors in deciding the time the clinic runs, for example, patient flow, explaining the reasons or the presence of companions.

- Consider running the clinic with support from registered or non-registered colleague for help supervising siblings; otherwise, you are always accountable for your own documentation and contemporaneous record keeping is essential.

- Remember the 8 Rs.

- Make sure you have access to the relevant chapters of the Green Book and this has been appropriately authorised and signed.

- Check eligibility for the vaccines and any contraindications.

- Always have a current immunisation schedule available for reference.

- Ensure you are up to date with immunisation training, including anaphylaxis.

- Make sure you have access to the relevant chapters of the Green Book.

- If you are not a prescriber ensure you are working from the most up to date PGD and this has been appropriately authorised and signed.

- Ensure the person with legal guardianship consents to the vaccine.

- Confirm the vaccinations that the child is attending for and in the presence of other siblings identify the correct child with a sticker if needed.

- For children outside of the national schedule refer to the flowchart for individuals with uncertain or incomplete immunisation status or your local health protection team or screening and immunisation team where there are doubts.

- If a vaccination error does occur, stay calm; explain what has happened and be open and honest with the parent/guardian.

- Obtain immediate advice from your supporting clinician and seek advice from your local immunisation team on an action plan/next steps.

- Generally, reassurance can be given that no immediate harm will come to the patient but vaccination with the correct vaccine will be required.

- Reporting errors is an important way of reflecting on what went wrong and preventing further vaccination errors.

Top tips

- Remember the 8 Rs.

- Ensure there is the ability to safely dispose of used sharps at the point of use.

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Further resources and country specific information can be found on the forum web page at www.nhs.org.uk/publications/immunisation-clinics-forum

- www.ccm.org.uk/standards/code
- www.gov.uk/government/publications/maternity-skills-immunisation-schedule

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References

Before you start
- Determine the appointment time is allocated for vaccinations, the average GPN appointment time is 10-15 minutes. We recommend best practice in a minimum of 20 minutes. However, you may want to consider the number of vaccines required and where in the schedule the child is often allocating sufficient appointment time.
- Consider the number of children attending the clinic, explaining the reasons or the presence of caregivers.
- Consider running the clinic with support from a registered or non-registered colleague for help supervising siblings, however you are always accountable for your own documentation and contemporaneous record keeping is essential.
- Ensure the appointment time is allocated for vaccinations, the average GPN appointment time is 10-15 minutes. We recommend best practice in a minimum of 20 minutes. However, you may want to consider the number of vaccines required and where in the schedule the child is often allocating sufficient appointment time.

• Remember the 8 Rs.
• Ensure there is the ability to safely dispose of used sharps at the point of use.
• Check eligibility for the vaccines and any contraindications.
• Always have a current immunisation schedule available for reference.

Resources
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Managing Childhood Immunisation Clinics

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Useful resources
- best practice guidelines

Managing Childhood Immunisation Clinics - best practice guidelines


Top tips

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• Consider other factors in deciding the time you allocate for appointments, explaining the reasons or the presence of companions.
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• Ensure you are up to date with immunisation training, including anaphylaxis.
• Make sure you have access to the relevant chapters of the Green Book.
• If you are not a prescriber ensure you are working from the most up to date PGD and this has been appropriately authorised and signed.
• Ensure the person with legal guardianship consents to the vaccine.
• Confirm the vaccinations that the child is attending for and in the presence of other siblings identify the correct child with a sticker if needed.
• For children outside of the national schedule refer to the flowchart for individuals with uncertain or incomplete immunisation status or your local health protection team or screening and immunisation team where there are doubts.

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Obtain immediate advice from your supporting clinician and seek advice from your local immunisation team on an action plan/next steps.

Generally, reassurance can be given that no immediate harm will come to the patient but vaccination with the correct vaccine will be required.

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Resources


Before you start

- Ensure appropriate appointment time is allocated for vaccinations, the average GPN appointment time is 10-15 minutes, consider whether an additional appointment is required, consider the number of vaccines required and allocate sufficient appointment time.

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• www.gov.uk/government/collections/advice-immunisation-infection-flowcharts


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