Vaccination in Adults
Make Sure Your Nurses’ Skills are Sharp

Did you know that approximately 42,000 adults in the U.S. alone die from vaccine-preventable diseases every year? While some diseases have been eradicated in certain parts of the world, they are still prevalent and in some cases epidemic in other parts of the world. Vaccination plays a vital role in ensuring vaccine-preventable diseases don’t pop up in parts of the world where they have been eliminated. In addition to preventing illness, it reduces the overall cost of medical care and improves workforce productivity by decreasing the number of days lost from work due to preventable diseases.

Administering vaccinations is a common part of many nurses’ day-to-day tasks, but nurses’ skill levels can vary. Check out the Dynamic Health™ competency checklist below to see if your nurses are checking all the boxes when it comes to administering vaccinations in adults.

**PRE-PROCEDURE STEPS**
1. Review the facility/unit protocol for administering immunizations to adults, if one is available
2. Note the type and number of vaccines ordered
3. Follow standard pre-procedure steps
4. Verify the “rights” of medication administration. See medication administration “rights.”

**PROCEDURE STEPS**
1. Assist the patient into a comfortable position that allows easy access to the area of the body where the immunization will be administered
2. Use an alcohol swab or facility-approved antiseptic to clean the injection site using a circular motion
3. Allow the site to air-dry
4. Uncap the syringe
5. Use techniques to promote effective vaccine delivery in target tissue, minimize injection site pain, and reduce risk for local reactions
6. Use I.M. administration for most vaccinations
7. Use Z-track injection if appropriate
8. Administer vaccinations in a larger muscle
9. Select the appropriate needle length for the vaccination administration
10. Stretch or spread the skin at, with your nondominant hand, between the thumb and index finger to create a firm surface and to isolate the muscle
11. Use your dominant hand to hold the syringe between the thumb and forefinger as if holding a dart
12. Position the needle at a 90° angle to the surface of the injection site and pierce the patient’s skin with the needle using a smooth, rapid motion
13. Inject the vaccine
14. Gently withdraw the needle using the same track as for injection, and release the skin to its normal position
15. Cover the injection site with a bandage
16. Do not massage the skin or muscle tissue at the site of the injection because doing so can irritate the muscle tissue and/or force some of the medication into the subcutaneous tissue

**POST-PROCEDURE STEPS**
1. Follow standard post-procedure steps
2. Assess the patient following immunization and educate about potential adverse effects, including allergic reactions.
3. Booster vaccinations are necessary for long-term immunity to certain diseases, including varicella, diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus

Like what you saw? There’s lots more where this came from. Dynamic Health™, our innovative new evidence-based tool, offers thousands of actionable clinical skills and accompanying competency checklists to help nurses and allied health professionals master critical skills. Users will find current, relevant, evidence-based information on core nursing competencies, transcultural care, patient training, occupational therapy, speech therapy, nutrition and dietetics, social work and so much more.

See it in Action