

Take Steps to Prevent Vaccine Errors in Your Pharmacy

You'll hear about the **latest measures to prevent vaccine errors**...especially with ongoing spring COVID-19 boosters.

Errors are still happening. For example, Ontario reports about 750 vaccine-related errors since COVID-19 vaccinations began.

Luckily, most vaccine errors cause little or no patient harm. But even minor incidents can lower patient trust in their pharmacist.

Work as a team to reduce the chance of vaccine errors.

Train your team to rely on checklists, charts, etc...not memory. Have a point person update these resources regularly.

When vaccinating multiple patients in a row, avoid multitasking and take steps to reduce distractions. Assign one team member to administer vaccinations...and offer appointments if feasible.

Store monovalent and bivalent COVID-19 vaccines separately in different bins or areas of the pharmacy...and do the same for adult and pediatric vaccines due to similar packaging.

Remind staff not to rely on cap colour alone to differentiate between vaccine vials...refer to the vial label instead.

Avoid drawing up multiple doses of vaccine at one time. But when it can't be avoided, label each pre-drawn syringe with product name, dose, lot number, and expiry date.

Before you give the vaccine, ask open-ended questions to confirm you have the right patient (name, birth date, etc)...and the right vaccine (product, dose, etc).

If staffing permits, get an extra set of eyes to verify.

If you identify a vaccine incident, inform the recipient and primary provider ASAP. Mention any impact on future vaccine doses and review any potential side effects that may develop.

Determine how the vaccine incident occurred and take immediate steps to avoid a repeat.

Report errors to Health Canada's Canadian Medication Incident Reporting and Prevention System (CMIRPS). And get our resource, *Preventing Med Errors*, to provide your techs with useful tips.

Key References:

-<https://pharmacyconnection.ca/the-right-vaccine-for-the-right-patient/> (5-1-23)

-<http://www.bccdc.ca/resource-gallery/Documents/Guidelines%20and%20Forms/Guidelines%20and%20Manuals/Immunization/Vaccine%20Safety/Strategies-prevent-COVID-19-influenza-vaccine-errors.pdf> (5-1-23)

-<https://www.oha.com/Bulletins/COVID-19%20Vaccine%20Errors%20and%20Deviations%20V3.0%2003-24-2022%20EN%20FINAL.pdf> (5-1-23)

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