

Strategies for Improving Immunization Rates

STAFF GUIDELINES: When vaccines are important to your staff they're important to your patients. These practices ensure that disease prevention is priority #1 in your office.

- Agree on a vaccination mission. Practices with multiple physicians protect their patients best when immunization decisions are consistent across all medical staff.
- Formally designate one staff member and schedule time for him or her to coordinate and monitor all immunization activities and ensure that all staff are aware of current practices and policies as well as new information as it is released or develops.
- Keep a list of clients who are due or overdue for immunizations and share with staff.
- Use a teamwork approach to keeping clients up-to-date (UTD) on immunizations, make sure all staff (including reception staff) are aware of the importance of immunizations, and that review of needed vaccinations becomes standard procedure at every office visit.

USE A REMINDER SYSTEM: You cannot vaccinate a patient that isn't in your office. Statistics indicate that offices using a reminder/recall system keep their patients fully protected.

- Schedule the client's next visit (including immunization-only visits) before they leave the office.
- Send parents home from each visit with a reminder about their child's next appointment and upcoming vaccines.
- Flag the patient's chart or electronic medical record to remind staff of needed vaccinations at the next visit.
- Call or send a reminder just before an appointment and remind to bring any updated immunization record(s).
- Call parents when their child misses an appointment and reschedule the visit as soon as possible.

DECREASE MISSED OPPORTUNITIES: Many patients do not get all the vaccines they need when they visit a doctor's office. These practices help to ensure patients walk out of your office fully protected from disease.

- Offer walk-in or immunization-only visits to all patients.
- Implement standing orders and administer all vaccines for which the child is eligible at each visit based on ACIP recommendations, even if access to the NCIR is unavailable.
- Strongly recommend vaccines to parents. Parents trust your opinion more than anyone else's when it comes to immunizations.
- Check the NCIR History/Recommendation page before every visit, give all vaccinations that are recommended, observe and follow valid contraindications only.
- When siblings are present at a scheduled appointment, double-check the vaccination records of all children and have a protocol for fast-tracking them into an immunization-only visit.

MAINTAIN ACCURATE AND UP TO DATE IMMUNIZATION RECORDS: NCIR is a great tool for tracking and protecting your patients.

- Update all historical immunization information into the NCIR as soon as the information is available.
- Enter all currently administered immunizations into the NCIR at the time of administration regardless of patient age, eligibility status, or funding source of the vaccine.
- Use the "client comment(s)" section to document all adverse reactions, contraindications, precautions, history of disease, parent/client refusals, and any temporary or permanent reasons why vaccines were not administered.
- Document in the medical record when a client transfers from your office to another office, and make their NCIR client status "inactive" for your organization.

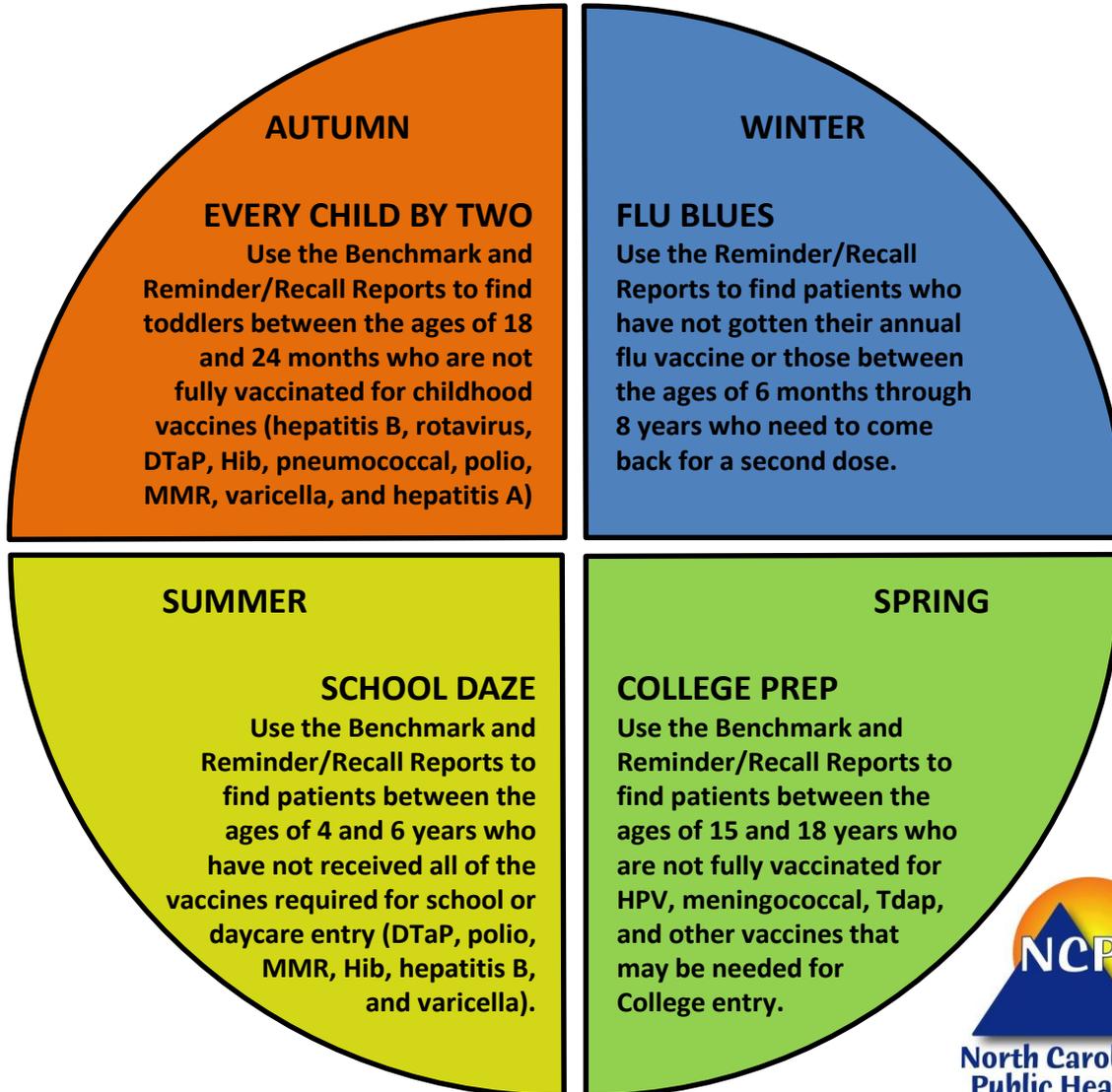
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- Instructions for the use of NCIR Reports: <http://bit.ly/afixnc>
- NCIR Education Resources: <http://bit.ly/ncireduction>
- Contact Information for Regional Immunization Nurses and Consultants: <http://bit.ly/ncipcontacts>



AN ANNUAL PLAN FOR PROTECTION

One of the best tips we give to doctors and nurses who want high immunization rates is to use the North Carolina Immunization Registry (NCIR) to make a list of patients who are due for vaccination. It can be hard to know which patients to look at and how often to make the list. Every practice's needs are different, but this chart can help you create a plan for your office that will help you keep your patients fully vaccinated and safe from disease.



OUTBREAK!

Is there disease circulating in your area? Protect your patients from pertussis, measles, hepatitis A, or other diseases that may be active in your area by using the Reminder/Recall Report to find patients who are not fully vaccinated against the threat.

SHORT-DATED VACCINE

Do you have vaccine that will expire soon? Use the Reminder/Recall Report to find patients who are behind on that vaccine. Call them in for a immunization-only visit to keep them fully protected and avoid wasting vaccine.

LEARN MORE

To learn more about using NCIR reports to keep your patients protected visit our provider education website at <http://bit.ly/ncireducation>, <http://bit.ly/afixnc>, or contact your Regional Immunization Consultant.

