

Missed Vaccination Opportunities & Wastage



California COVID-19 Vaccination Program

Never miss a vaccination opportunity! Vaccinate every eligible person who presents at a vaccination site—even if it means puncturing a vial at the end of the day.

Missed Opportunities

One obstacle to vaccination is a missed opportunity at a healthcare encounter in which a person is eligible to receive a vaccine but is not vaccinated completely. Missed opportunities can occur in all settings in which vaccines are offered, whether routine or not.

Missed opportunities occur for several reasons:

- Many healthcare providers avoid simultaneous administration of multiple injectable vaccines, frequently citing concerns about reduced immune response, adverse events, or perceived parental objections. **These concerns are not supported by scientific data.**
- Providers might even be unaware a child or adult needs a vaccination.
- Providers sometimes follow invalid contraindications (see Table 4-2 in ACIP's [General Best Practice Guidelines for Immunization](#) for a list of conditions incorrectly perceived as contraindications or precautions to vaccination).
- Some reasons relate to larger system issues (e.g., existing policies of only vaccinating children at well-care visits or not vaccinating siblings).
- Other reasons relate to institutional or bureaucratic regulations (e.g., state insurance laws denying reimbursement if a vaccine is administered during an acute-care visit).

Several studies have shown eliminating missed opportunities could increase vaccination coverage by up to 20%.

Recommendation: Providers should implement systems to ensure the practice never misses an opportunity to vaccinate. Establish a policy to vaccinate at every visit—not just well visits—and schedule the next vaccination appointment before the patient leaves.

(See **The Pink Book**, [Immunization Strategies for Healthcare Practices and Providers](#), “System-Based Barriers.”)

Guidance on Wastage

From CDC Email, May 11, 2021: Our goal is to increase vaccine confidence and for everyone who wants to be vaccinated to have every opportunity to be fully vaccinated once they become eligible. CDC and our partners are doing everything possible to minimize the amount of vaccine that goes unused.

Vaccine wastage may increase as the vaccine rollout continues because

- more providers (including smaller provider sites) are now receiving vaccine,
- vial sizes for some vaccines have increased, and
- vaccine vials may be opened without every dose being used.

To ensure providers do not miss an opportunity to vaccinate every eligible person, CDC recommends:

- Providers follow [clinical best practice for vaccination as well as best practices when managing inventory](#) to maximize vaccination and minimize dose wastage.
- **Providers should not miss any opportunities to vaccinate every eligible person who presents at a vaccination site—even if it means puncturing a multidose vial to administer vaccine without having enough people available to receive each dose.**
- Consider establishing and promoting standing vaccination days or half-days to increase likelihood of larger numbers of people presenting for vaccination on the same day.
- Vaccinate family members or friends who accompany patients to medical visits—even if they are not established patients at the vaccinating practice
- Continue outreach to employers or other community partners that have a large membership or network to arrange vaccination events.
- As contingency plan, vaccine providers should attempt to contact additional persons (i.e., from a waitlist or through personal contacts of persons being vaccinated) to use as many vaccine doses as possible.
- The more Americans who get vaccinated, the fewer COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, outbreaks, and deaths that will occur.
- CDC remains committed to helping jurisdictions and sites manage inventory and creating additional strategies to minimize vaccine wastage, including increased use of walk-in clinics.