Ways to Improve Childhood Immunization Rates

1. Schedule the child’s next well child visit (WCE) before they leave the building, even if it is two to six months away. Give the appointment card to the parent. Call or send a letter if a WCE appointment is cancelled, but not rescheduled, or if the child is a NO SHOW.

2. Offer vaccines at sick visits. Mild illnesses, colds, or being on antibiotics are not contraindications to giving vaccines. Check the child’s immunization status at every visit. Don’t let missed opportunities occur with your patients.

3. Tell parents when the next vaccines are due. Many children change clinics frequently.

4. Give all the vaccines needed simultaneously at a single visit today, even if it is six shots.

5. Give parents a WCE schedule so they assume some responsibility for getting their child to appointments as recommended. Include on it the UMHHC vaccine schedule.

6. Telephone parents to remind them that an appointment is needed for vaccines.

7. Remind parents that you have the Vaccines for Children program, which offers immunizations to children without insurance coverage.

8. Have “Shot Only” visits available whenever the Health Center is open. Offer Saturday or evening office hours to parents.

9. Parents who are declining vaccines present an opportunity to teach the values of preventing diseases with vaccines. Most parents have never seen people with these diseases.

10. Educate clinical nursing staff with annual immunization inservices using nurses from the county health department. Educate physician staff with annual immunization grand rounds.

**PLAN:** Increase immunization rates to 80% or higher for all two year old patients.

**DO:** Implement an action plan. Communicate it with all staff. Celebrate the successes.

**CHECK:** Monitor your results with charts or graphs so staff will see that they have made improvements with their patients. Evaluate the results.

**ACT:** Celebrate improvements. Try another option to increase rates further.

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