

Help Identify Patients Needing Measles Vaccination

You play a key role in **ensuring patients are vaccinated against measles**...especially with the recent uptick in cases.

Outbreaks often occur when an unprotected traveler picks up measles while abroad...and spreads it to unvaccinated people back home.

In fact, 9 out of 10 nonimmune patients will get measles after exposure...and about 1 in 4 or 5 will end up in the hospital with pneumonia, brain inflammation, or other complications.

Help ensure your patients are protected against measles.

Update patient profiles with medical conditions, immunization histories, etc...and verify the date of birth on file is correct.

These details will help the pharmacist determine whether a patient should get a measles-containing vaccine...such as MMR (measles/mumps/rubella) or MMRV (measles/mumps/rubella/varicella).

For example, most adults born in 1957 or later need at least ONE dose of MMR (*M-M-R II*, *Priorix*).

But TWO doses of MMR at least 4 weeks apart are needed for adults at higher risk of exposure...such as college students, healthcare workers, and international travelers.

And kids will get TWO doses of MMR or MMRV (*ProQuad*)...at 12 to 15 months, then at 4 to 6 years. But immunization may be needed sooner if traveling out of the US.

If there isn't a record of getting MMR, it's best to vaccinate.

Stay alert for patients who should NOT get MMR vaccine.

For instance, there's concern the live vaccine could lead to complications in patients with a severely weakened immune system...or birth defects in pregnant patients.

Don't expect to offer MMR boosters during a measles outbreak. This isn't recommended yet...since patients who are current with measles vaccination are considered to have lifelong immunity.

Read vaccine orders carefully...and clarify abbreviations...to ensure patients get the right immunization. "MMR" can easily be mistaken for "MMRV."

Limit confusion with storage. Labeling says that *M-M-R II* vaccine should be kept in the freezer or fridge...*Priorix* vaccine in the fridge...and the diluent for each vaccine in the fridge or at room temp.

To simplify this, ask about storing both MMR vaccines with their diluents in the fridge. This also helps ensure MMR is reconstituted with the correct diluent...and that the diluent isn't injected alone.

If you're an immunizer, remember that *M-M-R II* can be given subcutaneously or intramuscularly...but *Priorix* is only subcutaneously.

Use our resource, *The Basics of Immunization and Vaccines*, for billing and dispensing tips.

Key References:

- CDC. Stay Alert for Measles Cases. January 25, 2024.
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