

# Anticipatory Guidance to Recommend Routine Vaccination for Adults

Anticipatory guidance is a proactive counseling technique in which health care providers anticipate issues a patient might face and provide guidance. Knowing what comes next helps patients and/or parents and guardians better understand and prepare for their medical issues and feel confident about their relationship with their doctor.<sup>1</sup> For clinicians, anticipatory guidance can help them prepare to hold conversations with their patients and improve the overall quality of care in their offices and organizations.<sup>2</sup>

Anticipatory guidance is predominantly used during well-child visits and for pediatric immunization. However, this technique is also a proactive way to address routine vaccination for adult patients. In the United States, at least three out of every four adults are missing one or more routine recommended vaccines.<sup>3</sup> Some common barriers to adult vaccination include a lack of understanding of the benefits of immunization, misinformation, or inconsistent recommendations by providers.<sup>4,5</sup> Talking to patients ahead of time about their immunization needs can address many of these barriers and improve vaccination rates for adults.

## Anticipatory Guidance for Adult Vaccination:<sup>6</sup>

- Assess the vaccination needs of your adult patients during each visit by determining if a routine vaccine is due or if the patient has developed a chronic condition that increases their risk for vaccine-preventable diseases. Upcoming trips and travel also present an opportunity to discuss necessary vaccinations.
- Start the conversation with a presumptive and positive approach. Tell your patient which vaccine(s) is/are needed either during that visit or an upcoming visit.
- Inquire about your patient's concerns using open-ended questions. Ask why, how, and what questions. Many people have the misconception that immunizations are only for children or that the vaccinations they received in their childhood may still protect them later in life.
- Create a shame-free environment. Make patients feel comfortable to ask questions and discuss options.
- Use active listening and recognize teachable moments.
- Tailor your response to your patient's education level. Use plain, non-medical language. Explain things to patients as you would explain them to a family member.

- Give specific personalized advice.
- Supplement your discussion with educational materials. Visual images can improve the patient's recall of ideas.

## Recommended Routine Vaccination for Adults<sup>7</sup>

- Adults of all ages should receive an influenza vaccine every year. The influenza vaccine is also recommended for pregnant women to decrease the risk of flu and help protect the unborn baby from the flu.
- All adults need the tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (Tdap) vaccine every 10 years. For pregnant women, it is recommended that patients get a Tdap during every pregnancy.
- All adults need one or two doses of the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine (depending on if the patient was born in 1957 or later).
- Adults may need other vaccines to help protect against shingles, pneumococcal disease, and meningococcal disease.
- Adults traveling outside the U.S. may need additional vaccines depending on their destination.

## References

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