Immunization is a process through which by administering a vaccine can help a person become resistant or immune to an infectious disease. Vaccines stimulate our body’s immune system to protect us from contracting a disease later on in life. With its proven strategies that make it easily accessible to even the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach population, it has become one of the most cost-effective health investments.

During the National Immunization Awareness Month, which aims to increase everyone’s awareness about immunizations across the lifespan, we nurses, as part of the health care sector, it is our role to remind everyone to stay up to date on their vaccines.
VACCINES SAVES LIVES

Vaccination or immunization helps impede the development and the spread of many preventable diseases. Specifically related to child health, the use of vaccines has led to major improvements over a relatively short period of time. Immunization is not just for infants — to stay protected against serious illnesses, but for adults as well.

Many of the infectious illnesses in the past decades no longer affect most children today. The CDC has recommended an immunization guideline to help prevent vaccinated people of all ages from contracting several vaccine-preventable diseases.

The following are vaccine-preventable diseases:

- Diphtheria
- Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Human Papillomavirus (HPV)
- Influenza (Flu)
- Measles
- Meningococcal Infections
- Mumps
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough)
- Pneumococcal Infections
- Polio
- Rotavirus
- Rubella (German Measles)
- Tetanus
- Varicella (Chicken Pox)
Nurses Role in VACCINATION

Let’s take a look at the critical role that Nurses play in the process.

**COMMUNICATION**

Recent surveys conclude that more than 74% of parents trust the immunization advice given to them by pediatric health care professionals. Being on the front line of communication and care for the patient, nurses play a key role in providing advice and helping guide parents in deciding about their child’s vaccinations. It is important for nursing professionals to keep themselves well-informed about current immunization news, safety issues, and recent data supporting the benefits of maintaining vaccination schedules.

**SAFETY**

Nurses should be well knowledgeable about the safe handling and administration of vaccines. Proper storage procedures play a key role in maintaining the efficacy of vaccines. Adherence to storage temperatures and expiration dates must be followed. It is also important for nurses to stay updated regarding the administration of vaccines.

**FOLLOW-UP**

Any nurse responsible for the administration of vaccines should be well-versed in the recognition of and management of anaphylaxis. In today’s hectic clinical environment, it may be tempting to allow efficiency and volume to impact recommended vaccination administration. This level of efficiency can pose problems for the patient receiving the vaccination. Patient should be observed for at least 15 minutes after vaccination.
Vaccines are very important. Because of vaccines, many diseases do not occur or spread as much as they used to, but the bacteria and viruses that are responsible for these diseases remain in our environment. Travelers can also bring these diseases into this country. Without immunizations, these infections could quickly spread.
How do **VACCINES WORK?**

When your body becomes infected, the body relies on the immune system to fight the invading organism. White blood cells activate and begin making proteins called antibodies that locate the infectious agent and create a defense. By this time, the germs may have already caused a few symptoms. In some cases, the response of the antibody will be too late to be helpful and the invading organism could have already caused a severe or life threatening infection. Even so, the immune system and its antibodies can eventually help stop many infections and help you get well. Even after they’ve done their work, these antibodies remain in the bloodstream, guarding the body once it detects a similar invader. If these germs reappear, whether it’s a few weeks or many years later, the antibodies are ready to protect. They can often prevent the infection altogether or stop the infection even before the first symptoms appear. That’s why if you had the mumps or measles as a child, you will never get it again, no matter how often you were exposed to the same infectious agent. Immunizations rely on antibodies to fight off infections.
Vaccines, like any medicine, can have side effects too. For most vaccines, serious side effects are extremely rare. The risks of vaccines are much lower than the risks of the diseases they prevent.

Different vaccines have different side effects, most of which are mild. They appear shortly after the shot is given and should go away after one or two days. However, if these symptoms persist, doctor should be notified immediately.

- Temporary pain, causing a fear of vaccines: Fear or 'needle phobia' is a common side effect of vaccines. About 1 in 10 people avoid immunization and other needle procedures because they experienced pain from a previous shot.

- Redness, swelling, or soreness where the shot was given: A reaction after receiving the vaccine can occur. This may include redness, swelling, soreness, or bruising in the area where the shot was given. Advice the parents of your patients that the can apply a cool, wet cloth on the area to ease their child’s discomfort.

- Flu-like symptoms: After getting the vaccine, flu-like symptoms may develop. These include: mild fever, upset stomach, vomiting, loss of appetite, headache, and fatigue. Vaccines work by imitating the infection, sometimes causing flu-like symptoms. This infection does not cause illness. Rather, it trains the body to develop the right response. If the flu infects a vaccinated person, the body is now able to recognize it and fight it off.
Who needs to be VACCINATED?

Getting vaccinated is important for people of all ages. Inform the parents of your patients that infants and children can be protected from 14 serious childhood diseases by age 2. Preteens and teens need vaccines too. Seniors may need one or more vaccines, even if they received vaccines as a child or as a younger adult. It’s important for pregnant women to get vaccinated too, not just to protect her but also the child in her womb. Vaccines offer the best-known protection against many devastating illnesses. Following the recommended immunization schedule is the best way to ensure you are protected from deadly diseases. There is no science behind alternative immunization schedules. Delaying or withholding vaccines only increases the amount of time that children are vulnerable to diseases.
Don’t Forget

To Check UHS Medical Times For October

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Find out information on our STAND FOR PINK campaign in our October edition of UHS times.

This edition is primarily focussed to create awareness about detection of breast cancer and the various treatments available for breast cancer.

We Would Love to Hear From You

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