

IMMSFORMATION!

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BC Centre for Disease Control
An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority

NEW AND UPCOMING

The [BC Immunization Forum](#) will be held in Vancouver on Tuesday, March 3rd, 2020. This 1 day event is an educational and networking event for immunization program leaders, managers and front line staff, and is hosted by the British Columbia Immunization Committee. At this year's event, during the morning sessions, participants will discuss challenges and opportunities in immunization with a focus on vaccine hesitancy and hear from speakers from other jurisdictions who will share their experiences with implementing mandatory immunization programs. The afternoon will focus on successes from BC's HPV immunization program and strategies to increase HPV immunization rates. The event is broadcast live and sessions will be archived for later viewing. Registration for this event is by allocation through health authority/agency leads until January 31st. After this date, any remaining seats will be available to any health care professional who wishes to register. For more information go to [BCCDC Immunization Forums](#) or email IMMSForum@bccdc.ca.

GUIDELINES

Due to a national shortage, the RECOMBIVAX HB[®] Dialysis formulation of hepatitis B vaccine will not be available for the foreseeable future, likely until 2021. For clients with chronic kidney disease and HSCT recipients, the ENGERIX[®]-B hepatitis B vaccine can be used for vaccine series initiation or completion. It is important to note that the dosing and schedule for ENGERIX[®]-B differs from RECOMBIVAX HB[®] Dialysis; please refer to the BC Immunization Manual, Part 4, [Hepatitis B Vaccine Program for Chronic Kidney Disease Clients](#) and/or [Hepatitis B Vaccine Higher Dose Schedule](#) for more information. Please note that a recent revision to the guidelines has been made, indicating that if *any* dose in the series is given as ENGERIX[®]-B, a 4-dose series is required. This is a change from the previous recommendation that the number of doses in a mixed product series was dependent on the product used for the first dose only.

VACCINE UPTAKE

Almost 70% of 7-year olds in BC were immunized up-to-date for

age ([BC Routine Immunization Schedule](#)). By the end of the 2018/19 school year, 66% of grade 6 females and 63% of grade 6 males completed an HPV immunization series. Full coverage reports are available in the [Immunization Coverage Reports](#) section of the BCCDC website. Coverage statistics can also be viewed on the [Childhood Immunization Coverage Dashboard](#).

Vaccine Status Reporting Regulation Baseline Report

As of December 3, 2019, 71% of BC elementary and high school students had complete immunization records - 69% were immunized up-to-date for age, 2% were partially immunized, and 0.4% were unimmunized. Of the 29% of students who did not have complete immunization records, 22% had partial records and 7% had no immunization record. The completeness of immunization records varied by grade and by health region. These results will be compared to an interim report in March 2020 and an end of school year report in July 2020 to assess the impact of the VSRR on children's immunization records.



RESOURCES FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

The Professional Education Working Group (PEWG) (a sub-committee of the BC Immunization Committee) has updated the [Vaccines Recommended for Adults in BC - Online Quick Reference Guide for Health Care Providers](#). This resource highlights both publicly funded and non-publicly funded vaccines that are recommended for adults in BC. This quick reference guide links directly to the BC Immunization Manual for more detailed information on each vaccine. This resource is intended to be used online to ensure health care providers can easily access the most up to date and complete information regarding immunization of their clients/patients.

Vaccine Status Reporting Regulation

A [Q&A for the Vaccine Status Reporting Regulation](#) has been developed for health care providers. The Q&A is available on the BCCDC Immunization Clinical Resources page under Program Updates and Q&As.



Influenza immunization coverage among staff of acute and long term care facilities is assessed annually, and reports are available

on the [BCCDC website](#). For the 2018/19 season, influenza vaccination rates among staff of acute care facilities were at the highest level in the past decade at 78%. The 2019/20 influenza season is underway, and the Provincial Influenza Prevention Policy was recently amended by health employers based on advice from the Provincial Health Officer. The policy was first enacted in 2012 and requires health care workers and anyone entering health authority patient care areas (including visitors) to either receive the seasonal influenza vaccine or wear a mask while in patient care areas during the influenza season. Staff and physicians are also required to report their influenza immunization status through an online reporting system. Previously, unvaccinated staff who did not wear a mask in patient areas could be faced with disciplinary action. The amended policy has suspended the disciplinary aspect in favour of a more cooperative and collaborative approach that takes into account the professional judgement of health care staff and physicians. The expectation continues to be that staff will either be immunized against influenza, or wear appropriate personal protective equipment, including masks, in patient care areas. Reporting of immunization status continues to be required.



KUDOS

It was a busy summer and fall for public health in BC as we managed a very high demand for rabies post-exposure prophylaxis (RPEP). In contrast to a five-year median of 73 RPEP events, we experienced 664 RPEP events during epi weeks 29-40 (July 14 – October 5, 2019). A big thank you goes to the many health professionals who made it possible to implement dose-sparing measures. These actions ensured that all British Columbians had continued access to RPEP during the massive surge in demand.



VACCINE MANAGEMENT

Rabies Post-Exposure Prophylaxis Update

With the demand returning to baseline, Rabies Immunoglobulin (Rablg) dose-sparing measures have been discontinued. A full weight-based Rablg dose should be provided if Rablg is indicated. For more details, please consult the relevant [biological products pages](#). At this time, the [Interim Direction for the use of rabies vaccine for post exposure prophylaxis in BC](#) remains in place. Protocols for the use of rabies vaccine for post-exposure prophylaxis are being evaluated by the Rabies Working Group and CD Policy Committee.