

Guidance for Maintaining Childhood Immunizations During COVID-19 Pandemic

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Vaccine Preventable Disease Control Program (LAC DPH VPDCP) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that immunizing the youngest children remain a top priority in the context of well child care and community health. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/pediatric-hcp.html>

Wherever possible, scheduled appointments for routine childhood immunizations should not be deferred or canceled.

If your practice can provide only limited well child visits, healthcare providers are encouraged to:

- Prioritize newborn care and vaccination of infants and young children (through 24 months)
- Reschedule well visits and immunizations for those in middle childhood and adolescence to a later date.
- Balance the benefit of attending a well visit and receiving necessary immunizations and screenings with the risk of exposure to other children and adults with potential contagious diseases.
- Consider and adhere to guidance for modifications to the structure of your clinic schedule and physical space.

For guidance administering vaccines when a child is sick go to <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/visit/sick-child.html>

For guidance on immunization catch-up go to <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/hcp/imz/catchup.html>

For LAC DPH VPDCP Guidance on Maintaining Adult Immunization and Immunization for Pregnant Women During COVID-19 Pandemic go to: http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip/Docs/COVID_19/LACDPH%20Guidance%20for%20Maintainin%20Adult%20IZ_COVID-19.pdf

Delivery of Immunizations Should be Safe and Necessary

Practices affected by COVID-19 may consider several adjustments to their usual clinical operations for the delivery of newborn and well-child care including childhood immunization.

Examples from the American Academy of Pediatrics <https://services.aap.org/en/pages/covid-19-clinical-guidance-q-a/> include:

- Only conducting well visits for newborns, and for infants and younger children who require immunizations.
- Scheduling well visits in the morning and sick visits in the afternoon.
- Separating patients spatially, such as by placing patients with sick visits in different areas of the clinic or another location from patients with well visits.

- Collaborating with providers in the community to identify separate locations for holding well visits for children.

California's public health officials released guidance on April 1, 2020 on the use of cloth face coverings to protect against COVID-19 for Californians who must leave their homes to conduct essential activities. The use of cloth face coverings could reduce the transmission of COVID-19 by individuals who do not have symptoms and may reinforce physical distancing. A link to the new guidance can be found at <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Face-Coverings-Guidance.aspx>.

- Providers may want to advise all patients and their parents or guardians to adhere to this guidance as part of their well-child visit.

Immunization Resources

Patients may be referred to the following resources for immunizations in Los Angeles County but should call first to confirm if they are eligible and availability of services:

- <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/chs/phcenters.htm>
- http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip/IZclinics/PROVIDERS_REFERAL_LIST_06_07_2018.pdf
- or dial 2-1-1 (Los Angeles County Information Line).

More Information

County of Los Angeles and LAC DPH VPDCP
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/>
<https://covid19.lacounty.gov/>

CDC Guidance for Adults and Children
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/preparedness-checklists.html>
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/pediatric-hcp.html>

American Academy of Pediatrics
<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/covid-19-clinical-guidance-q-a/>

ACP Statement on Non-Urgent In-Person Medical Care
https://www.acponline.org/acp_policy/policies/statement_on_non_urgent_in-person_medical_care_2020.pdf

AAFP Guidance for Family Physicians on Preventative and Non-Urgent Care
https://www.aafp.org/dam/AAFP/documents/patient_care/public_health/AAFP-COVID-Non-Urgent-Care-Statement.pdf

AGOG Guidance During Novel Coronavirus and FAQs
<https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/practice-advisory/articles/2020/03/novel-coronavirus-2019>
<https://www.acog.org/clinical-information/physician-faqs/covid-19-faqs-for-ob-gyns-obstetrics>

LAC DPH VPDC and the CDC are monitoring the situation and will continue to provide guidance. Thank you for your commitment to keeping families and children healthy and safe.