

ImmunizeBC: An online resource for health professionals

Every day immunization saves lives and makes it possible for British Columbians to live free of illness and disability associated with many vaccine-preventable diseases. In 2007 the province developed ImmunizeBC, a strategic framework to stimulate collective action across the health system and ensure that all British Columbians understand the importance of immunization for themselves, their families, and vulnerable populations. ImmunizeBC is a collaborative project of the Ministry of Health, BC Centre for Disease Control, regional health authorities, and HealthLinkBC. A key component of the ImmunizeBC framework is its website, which provides evidence-based information on immunization for health professionals and the public, along with tools to make it easier for BC families to get immunized.

British Columbians rely on the province's network of dedicated health professionals, including physicians, to deliver immunization services. To support health professionals, ImmunizeBC hosts a range of clinical resources and information on immunization, vaccine-preventable diseases, and related issues. These resources can be found at www.immunizebc.ca in the health professionals' section.

At ImmunizeBC, doctors can find:

- The current BC immunization schedules for infants, children, and adults, with vaccine product monographs.
- A quick reference immunization communication tool for immunizers that provides both clinical evidence and client knowledge to address common immunization questions and vaccine misconceptions.

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- The BC Centre for Disease Control manual, Chapter II: Immunization Program, which provides best practice guidelines for the provision of immunization services.
- Resources to assist health practitioners in recognizing adverse events following immunization and the criteria and tools for reporting such events.
- Information on pharmacologic, physical, and psychological evidence-based interventions to increase child comfort before and during the administration of a vaccine.

ImmunizeBC also has resources on the various publicly funded vaccine programs in BC. For example, during influenza season physicians can visit the site to find information about the vaccine, a list of groups eligible to receive the vaccine at no cost, and updates on applicable safety issues. Resources about the live attenuated influenza vaccine given by nasal spray are also available. These resources include the steps of vaccine administration, a question-and-answer-document, and a list of health screening questions.

Physicians can also access resources created by other organizations, such as the Child Health Passport developed by the Ministry of Health and the Extra Protection Checklist on non-publicly funded vaccines created by the BC Pediatric Society. If physicians are unable to find the information they require at ImmunizeBC or have further questions, they can contact their local public health unit. Print resources, including immunization brochures and posters, may also be accessed from public health units.

In addition to providing information for health professionals, ImmunizeBC is a resource for the public. ImmunizeBC provides evidence-

based information about vaccines along with a number of tools to make it easier for BC families to get immunized. Examples of the tools available include:

- An immunization text message reminder service.
- An application that creates a child's personalized immunization schedule.
- An online postal code-based public health immunization clinic locator and flu clinic locator.
- An online chat with a nurse application.
- An interactive Q & A feature.
- Physicians are encouraged to refer their patients to ImmunizeBC to access these and other resources.

Vaccines have improved the lives of all Canadians, and in the last 50 years immunization has saved more lives than any other health intervention.¹ ImmunizeBC is committed to providing high-quality, evidence-based information for health professionals and the public.

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Reference

1. National Advisory Committee on Immunization. The benefits of vaccines. In: Canadian Immunization Guide. 7th ed. Ottawa, ON: Public Health Agency of Canada; 2006. p. 17.

For further information

- www.facebook.com/ImmunizeBC
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