

# Learning guide for public health nurses

## About this tool and instructions for completion:

The purpose of this supplemental guide is to provide new nurses working in public health with a structured tool to direct learning of immunization competencies based on the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) in [Immunization Competencies for Health Professionals](#).

It guides understanding and application of best practices, ensuring the necessary knowledge and skills to perform immunizations safely and effectively. Each section has an overall competency followed by guiding learning objectives.

Immunizers can use this tool as a checklist to ensure they have completed the necessary training to meet the immunization competencies for safe practice.

## 1. The Immune System and Vaccines

Competency	Comments	Completed
Explains how vaccines work using basic knowledge of the immune system.		
<b>Learning Objectives</b>		
Compare and contrast innate and adaptive immunity.		
Differentiate between primary and memory immune response to a vaccine.		
Differentiate between passive and active immunity.		
Explain why some vaccines induce a memory response while others do not.		
Name some host-and vaccine-related factors that affect the immune response to vaccines.		
Explain how the immunization schedule accommodates factors that affect the immune response to vaccines.		
Respond to the concern that giving too many vaccines will overload the immune system.		
Discuss the pros and cons of immunity gained through immunization as opposed to the wild-type infection.		

## 2. Vaccine- Preventable Diseases

Competency	Comments	Completed
Demonstrates an understanding of the rationale and benefit of immunization.		
<b>Learning Objectives</b>		
Describe clinical features, including acute & long term complications of vaccine-preventable disease.		
Describe the key epidemiologic features of each vaccine-preventable disease.		
Describe the historical impact of immunization on the epidemiology of vaccine-preventable disease.		
For each of the vaccines administered, have a response to the question “Why should I be immunized when vaccine-preventable diseases are so rare in Canada?”		

## 3. Vaccine Development and Evaluation

Competency	Comments	Completed
Integrates into practice understanding about vaccine development and evaluation.		
<b>Learning Objectives</b>		
Describe the marketing approval process for vaccines in Canada.		
Describe what is learned about vaccines after approval, through surveillance and post-marketing studies.		
Describe the responsibilities for each of the following relative to the post-marketing assessment of vaccine safety and effectiveness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vaccine manufacturers</li> <li>• Canadian regulatory authority (Biologics and Genetic Therapies Directorate)</li> <li>• Public Health Agency of Canada</li> <li>• Provincial/territorial Health departments</li> <li>• Vaccine providers</li> <li>• Healthcare providers who do not administer vaccines</li> <li>• Vaccine recipients or their parents/caregivers.</li> </ul>		

## 4. The Types of Immunizing Agents and their Composition

Competency	Comments	Completed
Apply knowledge of the components and properties of immunizing agents for safe and effective practice.		
<b>Learning Objectives</b>		
Classify each immunizing agent as live attenuated and non-live including their sub-classifications.		
Demonstrate the ability to describe live attenuated and non-live immunizing agents using plain language.		
Compare the major advantages and disadvantages of live attenuated versus non-live immunizing agents.		
Identify differences in the immune response to purified polysaccharide versus polysaccharide protein conjugate vaccines.		
Explain the purpose, function and concerns for the vaccine components: adjuvant, preservative, additives, glass vial, stopper, and pre-filled syringe.		
Utilize current resources on immunizing agents.		

## 5. Population Health

**Learn more:** Vaccine Hesitancy module on MyLearningLink.

Competency	Comments	Completed
Apply principles of population health for improving immunization coverage rates.		
<b>Learning Objectives</b>		
Use examples to show how immunization is a population-based health strategy.		
Explain the concept of herd immunity (also called community immunity) in plain language.		
Explain why vaccine-preventable diseases return when immunization coverage rates decrease. Give examples.		
Explain the importance of having a highly immunized healthcare workforce.		
Identify barriers to immunization uptake.		
Explain health promotion strategies to improve immunization coverage rates.		

## 6. Communication

**Learn more:** Vaccine Hesitancy module on MyLearningLink.

Competency	Comments	Completed
Communicates effectively about immunization.		
<b>Learning Objectives</b>		
Explain the importance of risk perception for immunization decision making.		
Assesses client/parent/guardian knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs regarding immunization and responds appropriately.		
Deliver clear messages about the benefits & risks of vaccines, and risks of vaccine-preventable diseases.		
Provide appropriate information & resources to clients/parents/guardians about immunization.		
Provide guidance to clients/parents/guardians so they can identify credible information sources.		

## 7. Storage and Handling of Immunizing Agents

**Learn more:** Vaccine storage and handling module on MyLearningLink.

Competency	Comments	Completed
Understand and implement Vaccine Storage and Handling Guidelines when storing, handling, and transporting vaccines.		
<b>Learning Objectives</b>		
State where to access the provincial guidelines about vaccine storage, handling, and transportation.		
Describe the provincial guideline requirements for vaccine storage, handling and transportation to the importance in vaccine potency and efficacy.		
Outline the steps for maintaining cold chain.		
Explain required actions to report and manage cold chain excursions.		

## 8. Administration of Immunizing Agents

Competency	Comments	Completed
Prepare and administer immunization agents correctly.		
<b>Learning Objectives</b>		
Use a checklist for pre-immunization client assessment, including precautions, contraindications, and indications for rescheduling.		
Ensure the 'Rights of immunization' are completed.		
Demonstrate the steps in vaccine preparation, including reconstitution, administration, and disposal.		
Name the resources that are used to guide immunization administration and decision making.		
Demonstrate the age-appropriate injection sites and proper client positioning used for immunization.		
Choose the correct needle length and gauge for the age and size of the client.		
Describe actions taken to increase safety in immunization settings related to the provider, the recipient, and the environment.		
Demonstrate the appropriate injection technique for immunization.		
Describe techniques to reduce pain associated with immunization.		

## 9. Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI)

**Learn more:** Anaphylaxis Management- Administration of Intramuscular Epinephrine module on MyLearningLink.

Competency	Comments	Completed
Anticipate, identify, and manage adverse events following immunization (AEFI).		
<b>Learning Objectives</b>		
Use appropriate resources to recognize the possible common, uncommon, and rare reactions to vaccines.		
Inform client/parent/guardian on what to expect and do regarding adverse events following immunizations.		
Aware of response to anaphylaxis and syncope.		
Document all adverse events following immunization and submit reportable AEFI appropriately.		
Distinguish between reportable and non-reportable adverse events following immunization.		

## 10. Documentation

Competency	Comments	Completed
Document information relevant to each immunization encounter in accordance with provincial practices.		
<b>Learning Objectives</b>		
Describe the role & importance of immunization records.		
Identify information to be documented on the immunization record.		
Record an immunization encounter accurately.		
Transfer immunization records to other providers and agencies in accordance with process.		
Record the reason and follow-up when a scheduled immunization is not given.		

## 11. Populations Requiring Specific Considerations

Competency	Comments	Completed
Recognize and respond to the unique immunization needs of specific populations.		
<b>Learning Objectives</b>		
Describe the unique immunization needs of specific populations, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individuals who are off schedule</li> <li>• Individuals who have had an AEFI</li> <li>• Individuals with certain medical conditions</li> <li>• Individuals who are pregnant or breastfeeding</li> <li>• Occupational risk groups</li> <li>• Travelers</li> <li>• New Canadians</li> <li>• Students</li> <li>• Individuals with lifestyle that increase their risk for vaccine-preventable diseases.</li> </ul>		
Refers to resources and professionals to address the immunization needs of specific populations, as required.		

## 12. The Canadian Immunization System

Competency	Comments	Completed
Demonstrate understanding of the immunization system in Canada and its impact on their own practice.		
<b>Learning Objectives</b>		
Describe how the National Immunization Strategy is relevant to practice.		
Distinguish between federal and provincial/territorial responsibilities as related to immunization programs.		
Awareness of healthcare providers who administer immunizations in different provinces.		
Describe the process to introduce a new publicly funded vaccine in a province or territory.		
Explain the reasons for the different immunization schedules among the provinces and territories.		
Locate the current Alberta immunization schedule.		
Identify legislation and regulations that may affect immunization delivery programs.		

## 13. Immunization Issues

**Learn more:** Module: Vaccine Hesitancy found on MyLearningLink.

Competency	Comments	Completed
Address immunization issues with an evidence-based approach.		
<b>Learning Objectives</b>		
Describe factors which lead to vaccine hesitancy.		
Describe the impact that misperceptions about vaccines have on immunization programs and on the population.		
Address misperceptions regarding vaccines using an evidence-based approach.		
Locate evidence-based information on issues relating to immunization.		
Use evidence-based knowledge to develop clear and concise messages about immunization benefits & risks.		

## 14. Legal and Ethical Aspects of Immunization

Competency	Comments	Completed
Act in accordance with legal and ethical standards in all aspects of immunization practice.		
<b>Learning Objectives</b>		
Discuss the implications of ethical principles including individual's rights, confidentiality, privacy, informed consent, and informed refusal.		
Describe the legal requirements for immunization administration, documentation, and reporting.		
Describe the legal requirements related to immunization status and exclusion from daycare, school, workplace, and other settings.		
Identify the immunizer's professional scope of practice as it relates to immunization.		
Discuss the ethical issues arising from mandatory vs. voluntary immunization.		
Discuss the responsibility to inform the client/parent/guardian of eligibility for provincially funded vaccines. Refer clients to other healthcare providers for non-provincially funded vaccines.		
Describe the ethical implications when a provider's beliefs conflict with evidence-based recommendations for immunization.		