

Getting Patients Caught Up May Not Be Easy. These **HIT** Strategies Might Help.



As COVID-19 isolation measures ease across the United States, many patients may be overdue for vital well visits as well as essential immunizations against vaccine-preventable diseases.¹

1 - Identifying Missed Vaccinations

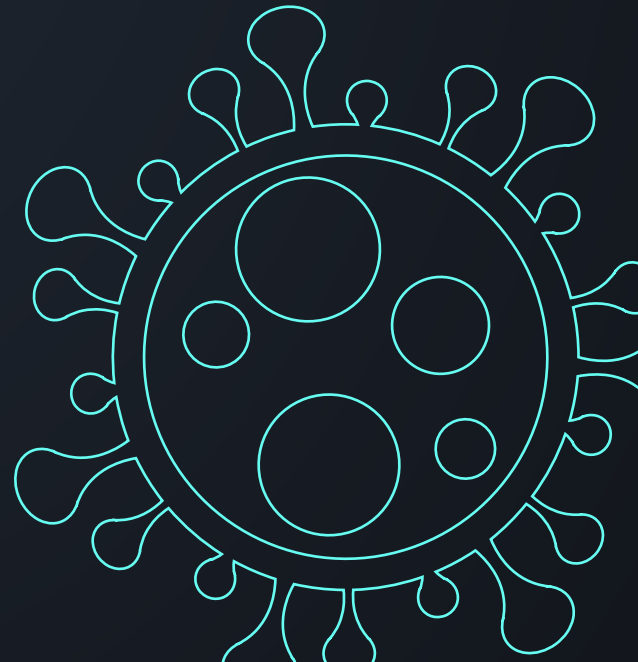
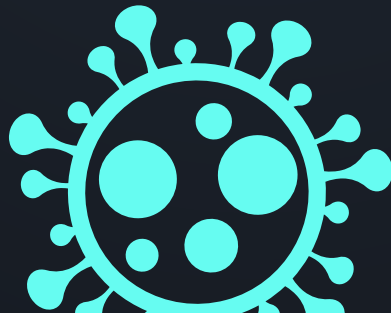
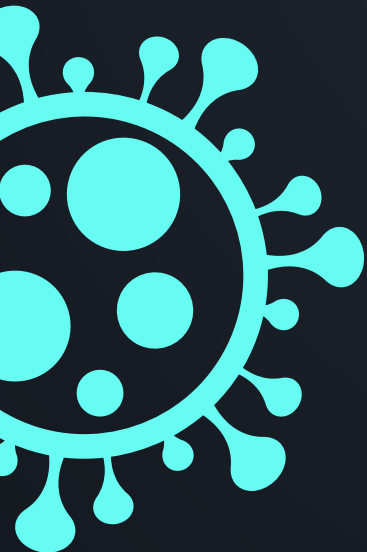
- **Run Electronic Health Record (EHR) missed appointment reports** to find patients who are in need of well visits and vaccinations, so you can send them appropriate outreach communications.⁴
 - One option is to conduct searches by age cohort whom you might otherwise overlook.⁵
 - Pediatric and adolescent providers should look at the whole family to see if there are multiple children who could be vaccinated at the same time.⁴
 - Adult primary care practices should prioritize vaccination for older adults and individuals with underlying medical conditions, because of their increased risk of disease and complications.⁶
- **Use Immunization Information Systems (IIS),** to remedy missed opportunities for both initial vaccinations and series completion.^{4,7}
 - Monitor age and vaccination intervals.⁸
 - Enter individual queries for both well visits and vaccinations.⁹
 - Check with your state or local Department of Health for other support and resources for vaccination.

Identifying these patients and persuading them to come into your office can sometimes be a challenge. Fortunately, **Health Information Technology (HIT)** can offer valuable assistance in this process.^{2,3} Have you considered some of these HIT strategies?

2 - Outreach/Pre-Visit Planning

- **Conduct automated electronic outreach efforts** (eg, email, text messages, or your patient portal) to alert patients/families about the need to reschedule appointments for vaccination.³
 - Communicate your office's new safety provisions and protocols to help ease potential anxiety about COVID-19 infection risk, and to inform patients about their responsibilities.¹⁰
- **Initiate personal outreach via telephone.**
- **Remind them of the importance of in-person checkups and scheduled immunizations.**^{3,11,12}
- **Pre-screen patients via questionnaire** to confirm vaccine eligibility.¹³

Continues on Reverse ▶



3 - During Routine Visits

- **Use Best Practice Alerts (BPAs)** to uncover and address care gaps.¹⁴
 - Consider setting a defined schedule for adult vaccinations.¹⁵
 - Check for vaccine eligibility.¹⁴

4 - After-Visit Engagement

- **Use after-visit tools (such as patient portals and state IIS vaccination reminders)** to engage patients/families about their next routine visit.¹⁶
- **Schedule follow-up vaccination visits** and establish electronic reminders.⁶



Use of Telehealth to Support In-Person Vaccination

- + **If in-person vaccinations in the medical home are not feasible, emphasize that immunization remains essential** to protect individuals and communities from vaccine-preventable diseases and outbreaks.⁶
- + **Encourage patients to seek their recommended vaccinations at alternate sites** such as pharmacies, temporary, off-site, or satellite clinics, and large-scale influenza clinics in accordance with CDC immunization schedules.⁶

This communication is not an endorsement of any specific measure. Each health care provider practice will need to determine what measures may be appropriate in light of the practice's specific circumstances to determine how best to manage patient visits.

At this time, there are no clinical data related to the administration of any of the Merck vaccines in patients diagnosed with COVID-19; therefore, the safety and efficacy of Merck vaccines in this population are not known.

References:

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