

Navigating Vaccine Gaps

Access to vaccines is a health equity issue that unfortunately, will not soon be resolved. It is important to recognize this and the fact that outside of the U.S., vaccine schedules and products vary. In order to ensure your patients from other countries are protected from vaccine preventable-illnesses and up to date with any required school vaccines, use these steps:

1. Initial Assessment

- Review patient immunization history. Look for the dates of administration, intervals between doses, and age at the time of vaccination. Be aware that some countries record dates with the day and month listed before the year (e.g., 30/1/2016 would be January 30, 2016).
- Assess vaccination needs based on age, medical history, and country of origin. There are other names for the vaccines that protect against the same diseases outside of the United States.
- Providers should only accept written, dated records as evidence of vaccination. Verbal reports of prior vaccination should not be counted.

2. Vaccination Process

- Overseas Vaccination Programs offer some age-appropriate vaccines, but migrants often lack required U.S. vaccines.
- Update vaccinations at first health visit.
- If a person cannot produce written documentation, documentation is invalid or incorrectly documented (ex: date recorded before birth) OR if there is concern about vaccine validity or falsification of records re-vaccination should be considered according to the CDC guidelines.
- Know that severe pediatric malnutrition at the time of immunizations may impair immune response.
- Laboratory evidence of immunity can substitute for vaccination.

3. Education and Communication

- Address language and cultural barriers.
- Educate on vaccine benefits, risks, and side effects.
- Offer recommended vaccines, including catch-up doses.

4. Long-term Care

- Provide education on importance of primary care and preventive health care.
- Establish trust with patients.
- Schedule follow-up appointments for completion of vaccine series.
- Provide reminders for future vaccinations.

Resources



[CDC Immunization Guidance for New Arrivals](#)
[Global Vaccine Brands and Availability by Country](#)
[Vaccine Preventable Terms in Other Languages](#)
<http://bit.ly/VaxRef>

Recommended Vaccines by Disease	Venezuela	Ukraine
Covid-19	✗	✗
Diphtheria	✓	✓
HIB	✓	✓
Hep B	✓	✓
Rotavirus	✓	✗
Pneumococcal	✗	✗
MMR	✓	✓
Influenza	✗	✓
Varicella	✗	✗
Tetanus	✓	✓
Pertussis	✓	✓
Polio	✓	✓
Hep A	✗	✗
HPV	✗	✗
Meningococcal	✗	✗
RSV	✗	✗
TB*	✓	✓
Yellow Fever*	✓	✗

* Are not recommended U.S. vaccines.

✓ Administers vaccine.

✗ Does not administer vaccine.

