



Fact Sheet: Administering Immunizations

The Nurses Association of New Brunswick (NANB) recognizes that it is essential that the public trust both the immunization and the professional who is administering it. Immunization safety extends beyond its pharmaceutical properties. It must be administered by professionals who are safe, competent, and ethical in all aspects of immunization administration. This includes knowledge and competency of informed consent, injection techniques, reconstitution, storage requirements, side effects, emergency management and reporting of adverse reaction, documentation, and disposal. Administration of immunizations also required knowledge of recommendations from the [Canadian Immunization Guide](#).

NANB receives queries every year from nurses¹ about immunizations. This fact sheet outlines requirements and some considerations for nurses administering immunizations.

When administering immunizations whether in the context of individual client administration or mass immunization programs the nurse must ensure that they:

- are competent to administer the immunization and manage any possible side effects;
- follow the [New Brunswick Immunization Program](#) as required;
- have a prescription or directive² for the administration of the immunization and for any medications required for managing possible side effects, unless you are an authorized prescriber;
- have obtained informed consent from the client;
- have a documentation process in place (visit the [Standards for Documentation](#) for additional information); and
- report any adverse events following immunization (AEFIs) as required, as per the [Public Health Act](#).

Nurses are accountable for the care they provide (NANB, 2019). Prior to administering an immunization, the following factors should be considered:

- Do you have the knowledge, skill and judgement required to:
 - Assess the appropriateness of the immunization? Indications and contraindications for giving the immunization, the risks involved, and the expected outcomes must be understood.
 - Take appropriate actions before, during and after the administration of the immunization including proper storage and handling of the immunization, reporting requirements, and obtaining consent?

¹For the purpose of this document, the term “nurses” refers to all NANB members, including graduate nurses, registered nurses, and nurse practitioners.

² For additional information on directives, read *What is a Directive* (NANB, 2018): <http://www.nanb.nb.ca/media/resource/NANB-FAQ-Directives-June2018-EN.pdf>



- Do you have the competence and resources to intervene in the event of an emergency? For example, having an anaphylaxis kit available and the appropriate order or medical directive for its use, and be able to manage this outcome (e.g., respiratory equipment and/or support).
- Do you have a complete understanding of what is required for informed consent (visit [Fact Sheet: Consent](#) for additional information)? For example, informed consent requires communication between a client and/or substitute decision maker and a member of the healthcare team and must include:
 - the nature of the treatment;
 - the expected benefits of the treatment;
 - the risks and side effects of the treatment;
 - alternative courses of action; and
 - the likely consequences of not having the treatment (NANB, 2020).
- Do the documentation processes in place support you to meet your standards for documentation? Are you able to identify the information to be documented on an immunization record?

For more information on your standards of practice or medication management visit the [NANB Nursing Standards webpage](#). If you have additional questions about administering immunizations, please contact NANB at 1-800-442-4417 or nanb@nanb.nb.ca.

Influenza is a contagious respiratory illness that can shift its antigens from one season to another, therefore annual outbreaks of influenza are a major concern (Rizzo, Rezza, & Ricciardi, 2018). Preventive measures to limit the spread of influenza include both individual and public health interventions such as: hand hygiene, coughing into your sleeve instead of your hand, staying home when sick, wearing masks as appropriate, and influenza vaccination.

For additional information on influenza, visit:

- [Health Canada](#)
- [Government of New Brunswick](#)

References

Nurses Association of New Brunswick. (2019). *Standards of Practice for Registered Nurses*.

<http://www.nanb.nb.ca/media/resource/NANB2019-RNPracticeStandards-E-web.pdf>

Nurses Association of New Brunswick. (2020). *Fact Sheet- Consent*.

<http://www.nanb.nb.ca/media/resource/NANB-FactSheet-Consent-Dec20-E.pdf>