

Fact Sheet: Administering Vaccines

The Nurses Association of New Brunswick (NANB) recognizes that it is essential that the public trust both the immunization programs and the professional administering the vaccination. Immunization safety extends beyond its pharmaceutical properties. It must be administered by professionals who are safe, competent, and ethical in all aspects of vaccination 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. Vaccination also requires knowledge of recommendations from the [Canadian Immunization Guide](#) and the [New Brunswick Immunization Program Guide](#).

NANB receives queries every year from nurses¹ regarding vaccination. This fact sheet outlines requirements and considerations for nurses administering vaccines.

Nurses are accountable for the care they provide (NANB, 2019). Whether in the context of individual client vaccination or mass immunization programs, nurses must ensure that they have the competency, skills, and knowledge to support safe vaccination practices.

Vaccination practices must be in accordance with legislation, standards, and policies. Authorized prescribers² and immunizers must follow the National Guidelines in the [Canadian Immunization Guide](#) as well as the provincial guidelines in the [New Brunswick Immunization Program Guide](#) (NBIPG) (Government of New Brunswick [GNB], n.d.-b).

When administering vaccines, nurses must ensure that meet the following requirements:

- Have the recognized training and maintain their competencies in all areas of immunization practice (GNB, n.d.-a); the [NBIPG](#) lists the Immunization Competency Standards for All Immunization Providers.
- Have a prescription or directive³ from an authorized prescriber to administer the vaccine and for any medications required for managing possible side effects. Authorized prescribers do not require a directive to provide vaccinations (GNB, n.d.-b).

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

² In NB current authorized prescribers include physicians, nurse practitioners, optometrists, dentists, pharmacists, and midwives.

³ For additional information on directives, refer to [What is a Directive?](#)

- Assess the appropriateness of the vaccination (considering indications and contraindications, risks involved, and expected outcomes).
- Obtain and record informed consent for vaccination; or manage refusal or withdrawal of consent as required.

Refer to the following resources for additional information:

- [Fact Sheet: Consent](#)
- [NBIPG](#) – Consent for Immunization
- Have a documentation process that is in accordance with the [Standards for Documentation](#); and are knowledgeable about the information to be documented on an immunization record.
- Report adverse events following vaccination (AEFIs) as per reporting requirements under the [Public Health Act](#) and the [NBIPG](#).
- Maintain a safe vaccination environment and are competent in anaphylactic management.
- Take appropriate actions before, during and after the administration of the vaccine including proper storage and handling.

For more information on the Standards of practice for medication management, refer to the [NANB Nursing Standards](#) webpage. For questions on vaccine administration, please contact a Nurse Consultant at practiceconsultation@nanb.nb.ca.

References

Government of New Brunswick. (n.d.-a) New Brunswick Immunization Program Guide. Policy 2.4 – Immunization Competency Standards for All Immunization Providers (updated March 2023). <https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/hs/pdf/en/CDC/HealthProfessionals/NBIPG-policy2-4-e.pdf>

Government of New Brunswick. (n.d.-b) New Brunswick Immunization Program Guide. Policy 2.5 - Directive for the Provision of all Immunization Providers (updated March 2023). <https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/hs/pdf/en/CDC/HealthProfessionals/NBIPG-policy2-5-e.pdf>

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

https://www.nanb.nb.ca/resourcelibrary/?_rl_search=standards%20of%20practice%20for%20registered%20nurse&_rl_side_categories=nursing-practice