

# Vaccine Roadmap 2021

Planning for **COVID-19 & Beyond**

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## INTRODUCTION

# 2021: The Year of the Vaccine

**This year, there's more happening in the immunization landscape than at any time in recent memory.** The ongoing rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine may be the lead headline, but there are plenty of other important changes and updates to the 2021 schedule that every practice should be aware of.

At VaxCare, we've drawn upon our vaccine expertise to create this short guide to 2021—how to navigate the rollout of **COVID-19 vaccines**, the changes to the **immunization schedule**, and the need to **safely vaccinate our communities**—to help you prepare for yet another unprecedented year in healthcare.

Yours in Health,

**VaxCare**

# What's New on the Vaccine Schedule



Before we delve into the COVID-19 vaccine, there are some notable changes and additions to the CDC's **Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) 2021 immunization schedule** that will be of great benefit to patients:

## 01 Vaxelis

**Vaxelis (Sanofi/Merck) is a pediatric hexavalent vaccine** that includes antigens for diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, and poliomyelitis, as well as antigens for H. influenzae type b and hepatitis B. This vaccine was approved by the FDA in December 2018, and the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program subsequently voted unanimously to include all parts of Vaxelis. This new vaccine should be available for patient use in 2021, and because it rolls up six vaccines into one, it's critical to make sure your systems and inventory are updated accordingly to ensure reimbursement for the correct number of antigens.

“These new combination vaccines provide an opportunity to help their patients catch up on their schedules more quickly, which is especially important during the pandemic,” says Dr. L.J. Tan, chief strategy officer of the Immunization Action Coalition.

### 02 MenQuadfi

**MenQuadfi (MenACWY/Sanofi) is the first FDA-approved quadrivalent meningococcal vaccine** that uses tetanus toxoid as a protein carrier, demonstrates a high immune response across all four serogroups, and helps protect an expanded age group—both younger and older patients—better than previous offerings. It was approved by the FDA in April 2020 for patients two years and older and approved as an option within the VFC program. No ACIP policy vote was needed as the addition of MenQuadfi required no changes to the current meningococcal recommendations for dosing and scheduling. According to the manufacturer, MenQuadfi will replace Menactra on the schedule at a future date.

### 03 Zostavax off the Schedule; Shingrix Fully Available

**As of November 2020, Zostavax (Merck) shingles vaccine is no longer available for use in the United States.** The only shingles vaccine on the 2021 schedule is Shingrix (GlaxoSmithKline/GSK), the recombinant zoster vaccine that was licensed by the FDA in October 2017 and is recommended for patients 50 years and older. Though there were troubling shortages of Shingrix in 2019, there is no indication of a shortage in 2021; however, GSK did raise prices on Shingrix by 7% for this year. +

# Where We Are & What's to Come



The ongoing rollout of **COVID-19 vaccines** is the story of the year and a top priority for physician practices.

**As of January 2021, two vaccines are available:**

- **Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine (mRNA)**
- **Moderna COVID-19 vaccine (mRNA)**

**Others that are likely to become available in the near future:**

The full results from phase 1 & 2 clinical trials of **Johnson & Johnson's single-dose coronavirus vaccine**, developed by the Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson & Johnson, are expected in early 2021. Preliminary results have been promising: With participants aged 18-55 years, the single-dose vaccine shows an immune response of at least 71 days. In addition to only requiring one dose (not two), this adenovirus-based vaccine is less fragile than mRNA-based vaccines and remains stable in a refrigerator for months. "I'm optimistic that this

vaccine will move us forward in ease of distribution because staff will be familiar with safe storage procedures and it will not require any special refrigeration,” says Dr. Wanda Filer, chief medical officer at VaxCare.



The timeline for the **Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine** (known as AZD1222 or COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca) is a bit less certain, with projections for approval ranging from mid-February to March. What we do know: This is a two-dose vaccine, and like the J&J vaccine, it is an adenovirus-based vaccine. This vaccine is already being administered in the U.K. and has been cleared for use in India, Argentina, El Salvador, and several other countries across the globe. According to AstraZeneca, “The vaccine can be stored, transported, and handled at

normal refrigerated conditions (two-eight degrees Celsius/ 36-46 degrees Fahrenheit) for at least six months and administered within existing healthcare settings.”<sup>01</sup>

**Numerous other vaccines are in the pipeline**, representing a wide range of strategies that marks an unprecedented era in the advancement of vaccinology.

**For the most up-to-date information, visit:**

- [www.cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) > COVID-19 Vaccines
- [www.immunize.org](https://www.immunize.org) > Vaccines > COVID-19

## Coding Is Key

**Although the COVID-19 vaccine is currently being offered for free, practices can still be reimbursed for administering the vaccine**, with the second dose of two-dose vaccines receiving a higher reimbursement than the first. Along with individual codes for each COVID-19 vaccine, there is an individual code for the administration of the first and second doses of each vaccine, put in place to allow for more precise tracking of vaccines. That means the CPT code for administration of the first dose of a Pfizer

<sup>01</sup> “Serum Institute of India obtains emergency use authorisation in India for AstraZeneca’s COVID-19 vaccine”, [astrazeneca.com](https://astrazeneca.com)

vaccine is distinct from the CPT code for the first administration of the first dose of the Moderna vaccine.

**We suggest these two sources for the latest information on reimbursements, coding, and rates for the COVID-19 vaccine:**

- **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** ([www.cms.gov](http://www.cms.gov))
- **Health Resources & Services Administration** ([www.hrsa.gov](http://www.hrsa.gov)); search 'Claims for reimbursement for patients without insurance'

## Playing Vaccine Catch-Up

**The pandemic may have made vaccinations top-of-mind, but it has also driven down administration rates for all other vaccines.** As COVID-19 vaccines move into the wider population and we build a new normal, primary care offices can once again be at the forefront of protecting their communities against COVID-19 and other vaccine-preventable illnesses.

"We've seen tremendous loss in traditional immunization coverage rates," says Dr. Tan. **"The rates are particularly abysmal in adolescents and adults.** As the COVID-19 vaccine becomes more available and the pandemic comes to a close, it's going to be important for physicians to get their patients back in the office and catch everyone up so we avoid outbreaks of other diseases."

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One very important issue to consider in catch-up vaccines and COVID-19: **The CDC and the AAFP recommend you wait two weeks on either side of administration of the COVID-19 vaccines** to administer other vaccines (flu, etc.), but many patients may be hesitant to receive any other vaccines until two weeks after they receive their second dose.



## Preparing for Vaccination Success

By now, we've all seen the huge lines of people waiting for the COVID-19 vaccine, and it's a good reminder of how important **preparation** is to making your vaccine program—COVID-19 and otherwise—run smoothly. Now is the time to get ready for the influx of patients, especially the **school-age children who will need vaccines** as in-person school and sports come back in full force.

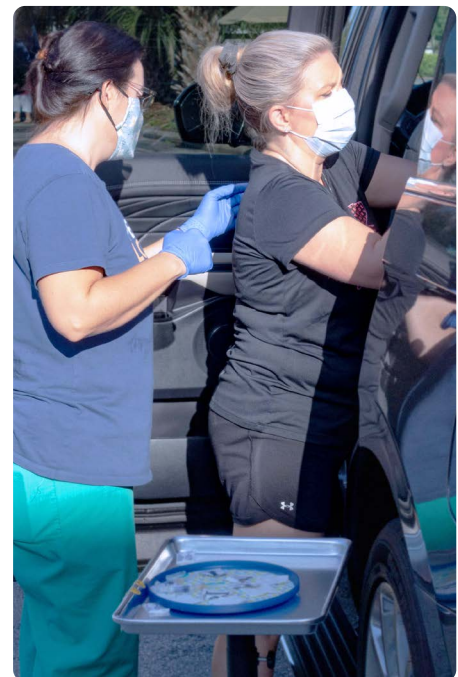
The best first step is to appoint a dedicated “**vaccine champion**” in your practice if you don't already have one. Your champion should be fully trained in everything around vaccine administration—both routine and emergency policies and procedures—and keep the troops rallied behind the cause, making sure every detail is covered to keep your program running **efficiently and profitably**:

- 01**    **Ordering and maintaining** your vaccine inventory, as well as syringes and other supplies
- 02**    **Creating** screening checklists, procedural guidelines, and other protocols for keeping vaccinators up to date
- 03**    **Ensuring** proper storage, handling, and maintenance of your vaccines
- 04**    **Monitoring** compliance, billing, and reimbursements

It's a big job, and it's **crucial for your success**.

## Thinking Outside the Practice Walls

While the pandemic has been hard on everyone, it's also inspired a creative spirit in almost every part of our culture: **from *Hamilton* cast concerts on Zoom to spontaneous outdoor dining pop-ups**. Some physician practices have gotten creative, too, finding ways to keep their patients up to date on their vaccinations by **establishing curbside or drive-through vaccination clinics**.




Starting—or continuing—your own **outside-the-office clinic in 2021** can help bring patients back to your practice, while staying safe.

Here are a few tips to help you meet the unique challenges of **vaccinating your patients safely in a pandemic**:

- 01** When you're setting up your curbside or drive-through vaccination clinic, make sure that the site you've chosen has enough **space to accommodate patients while being properly physically distanced**. You'll also want to designate an area at the site for patients with **urgent medical problems**. And continue to follow **standard infection control procedures**, such as installing handwashing or hand sanitizing stations.
- 02** Wherever you've set up outside the office, make sure you're able to properly **store and handle vaccines**—i.e., you may need to purchase a generator to power the fridge or freezer for the occasion.
- 03** Empower your vaccine administrator to **create and implement a plan** to make sure your administration practices stay intact; it can be harder to keep track of doses in and doses out when you're not in your traditional space.
- 04** **Confirm you have reliable internet access** so you can easily retrieve or enter information into an immunization information system (IIS) or electronic medical record. (Or use a technology that connects to a cellular network such as the **VaxCare Mobile Hub**.)

**For more detailed help, visit:**

- **Immunization Action Coalition** ([www.immunize.org](http://www.immunize.org)); search 'Supplies You May Need at an Immunization Clinic'
- **The CDC** ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)); search 'Guidance for Planning Vaccination Clinics Held at Satellite, Temporary or Off-Site Locations' 

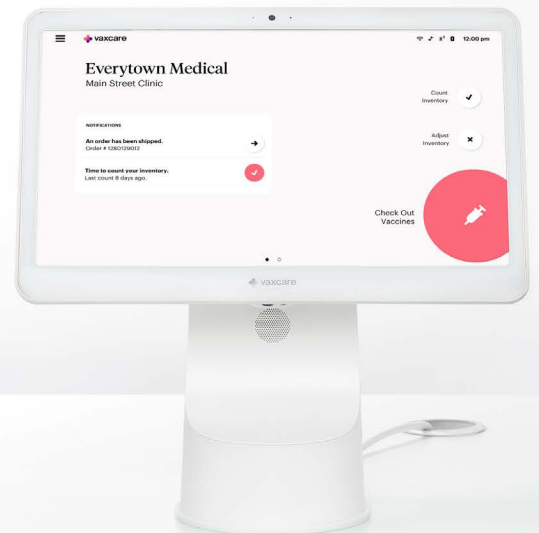
## INTRODUCING VAXCARE

# It's Easy When You're Automated

When managed properly, your 2021 vaccine program can be both a public service to your patients and a much-needed boost to your revenue stream after 2020's losses. But with **so much complexity in this year's vaccine landscape**, it will be harder than ever to manage your program on your own. That's where a partner like VaxCare comes in.

**VaxCare** is a comprehensive solution that simplifies, optimizes, and automates your vaccine program. **Here's how it works:**

- 01 We handle the headache of vaccine purchasing,** providing unlimited inventory at no cost and automatically replenishing your stock when the supply gets low. New vaccines on the schedule? We'll get them for you.
- 02 We automate your workflow,** eliminating manual tasks and costly errors.
- 03 Our platform ensures you're paid for every qualifying dose** and provides the end-to-end visibility you need to keep your vaccine program profitable.
- 04 Our new Mobile Hub, fast-track developed in response to the pandemic, is a hand-held device that allows practices to administer vaccines anywhere—** curbside, drive-throughs, or vaccination fairs. The Mobile Hub does not require Wi-Fi, removing the need for an internet connection.



With VaxCare, all that's left for you to do is **take care of your patients.**

**For more information, reach us at:**

**+1 (888) 829-8550** or **[www.vaxcare.com](http://www.vaxcare.com)**

