This section must be completed by the attending physician, the medical examiner, or the coroner. An important feature is the reported underlying cause of death determined by the certifying physician and defined as (a) the disease or injury that initiated the train of morbid events leading directly to death, or (b) the circumstances of the accident or violence that produced the fatal injury. In addition to the underlying cause of death, this section provides for reporting the entire sequence of events leading to death as well as other conditions significantly contributing to death.

The cause-of-death section is designed to elicit the opinion of the medical certifier. Causes of death on the death certificate represent a medical opinion that might vary among individual physicians. A properly completed cause-of-death section provides an etiologic explanation of the order, type, and association of events resulting in death. The initial condition that starts the etiologic sequence is specific if it does not leave any doubt as to why it developed. For example, sepsis is not specific because a number of different conditions may have resulted in sepsis, whereas human immunodeficiency virus syndrome is specific.


New HPV Schedules

The human papillomavirus (HPV) section of the Recommended Immunization Schedule for Persons Aged 0-18 years has been changed by the CDC. A minimum six month interval between administration of the first and third doses of HPV vaccine is recommended. To access the revised Summary of Recommendations: http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/schedules/child-schedule.htm#catchup

New Flu Vaccine Provisional Recommendations

Annual vaccination for all children aged 6 months through 18 years is recommended. Annual vaccination of children aged 6 months up to their fifth birthday (through 59 months of age) should continue. If feasible, annual vaccination of all children aged 5 years through 18 years should begin in 2008 when the vaccine for the 2008-2009 influenza season becomes available. To access the complete Provisional Recommendations: http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/provisional/downloads/flu-3-21-08-508.pdf

New Recommendations to Prevent Shingles

Zoster vaccine is recommended for all persons aged >60 years who have no contraindications, including persons who report a previous episode of zoster or who have chronic medical conditions. The vaccine should be offered at the patient’s first clinical encounter with his or her health-care provider. It is administered as a single 0.65 ml dose subcutaneously in the deltoid region of the arm. A booster dose is not licensed for the vaccine. Zoster vaccination is not indicated to treat acute zoster, to prevent persons with acute zoster from developing post-herpetic neuralgia (PHN), or to treat ongoing PHN. Before administration of zoster vaccine, patients do not need to be asked about their history of varicella (chickenpox) or to have serologic testing conducted to determine varicella immunity.

Tdap: New Pregnant/Postpartum Women Recommendations

Until additional information is available, CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommends that pregnant women who were not vaccinated previously with Tdap: 1) receive Tdap in the immediate postpartum period before discharge from hospital or birthing center, 2) may receive Tdap at an interval as short as 2 years since the most recent Td vaccine, 3) receive Td during pregnancy for tetanus and diphtheria protection when indicated, or 4) defer the Td vaccine indicated during pregnancy to substitute Tdap vaccine in the immediate postpartum period if the woman is likely to have sufficient protection against tetanus and diphtheria. Although pregnancy is not a contraindication for receiving Tdap vaccine, healthcare providers should weigh the theoretical risks and benefits before choosing to administer Tdap vaccine to a pregnant woman. http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5704a1.htm?s_cid=rr5704a1_e

Back to School Time is Nearly Here!

Encourage parents to schedule appointments to update their children’s immunizations for school start this fall to avoid delays in starting. For updated immunization schedules: http://ww2.cdph.ca.gov/programs/immunize/Documents/imm438.pdf