

Perioperative Flu Vaccination: Does it Work?

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Abstract Background Information: Influenza season occurs annually October through April with primary care providers typically managing flu vaccine administration. Pediatric flu vaccination is variable with a CDC estimated coverage of 51% in the 2023-24 season.

Objectives of Project: A perioperative department sought to provide flu vaccinations to surgical-procedural patients at a freestanding children's hospital in the 2023-2024 season.

Process of Implementation: An EMR-based flu vaccine screening-ordering workflow was created. Pre-procedural nurses called families 24-72 hours before a scheduled procedure. As part of routine screening, nurses asked caregivers if a flu vaccine was needed and desired on the day of surgery. A vaccine order was placed for vaccine-eligible children if the caregiver requested. On the day of surgery, the order was released, and the vaccine was obtained by the preop RN. Vaccine education and the CDC Vaccine Information Sheet were provided by the preop RN. Preop-to-OR handoff included the vaccination request. After induction, the vaccine was administered by the anesthesia provider and documented by the OR RN.

Statement of Successful Practice: In the 2023-2024 season, 80% of patients were screened preoperatively; 91% of vaccine-eligible patients whose caregiver requested the flu vaccine received it in the OR. There were zero delay-to-care events or vaccine reactions reported in the hospital event tracking system in OR-vaccinated patients. There were no delays in case-starts or case-completion due to vaccine administration. Flu vaccination in a hospital surgery center benefits patients, families, and community health, and did not create delays to patient care. Greater vaccination coverage is achievable by replicating perioperative flu vaccinations across all ambulatory surgery sites of care.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: Perianesthesia nurses play a key role in promoting optimal health for their surgical patients. This includes health promotion and disease prevention. Optimizing vaccination opportunities through education and coordination of care in the perioperative setting supports the patient, their family and the community.