

Principles and considerations for adding a vaccine to a national immunization programme

FROM DECISION TO IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING



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Preface

This is a general guidance document that can be used as a reference for making decisions about and planning the introduction of a vaccine into a national immunization programme. It draws from the experiences of many countries that have introduced new vaccines.

This document is an update of the 2005 WHO Vaccine Introduction Guidelines and it brings together the recommendations and guidance from many recent guidelines, tools and other documents on specific aspects of immunization and on specific vaccines. It provides updated information relevant to many vaccines that are being introduced into national immunization programmes now and in the coming years, including pneumococcal conjugate, rotavirus, meningococcal A, rubella, human papillomavirus (HPV), Japanese encephalitis, and inactivated polio vaccines. For more detailed information about a specific vaccine or aspect of immunization, decision-makers and planners should consult vaccine-specific introduction guidelines and other tools developed by WHO, UNICEF and other partners. This document provides links to many of these guidelines and tools.

Drawing upon recent research findings,¹ this document also places new emphasis on the potential impact of vaccine introduction on the immunization programme and the overall health system. Suggestions are provided throughout the document on ways to minimize possible negative effects of introducing a vaccine on the immunization programme and health system, as well as ways to maximize the opportunities that a vaccine introduction can provide to strengthen these systems.

What is the purpose of this document?

- To assist countries in making informed decisions about adding a vaccine to a national immunization programme by considering its public health priority;

⁰¹ See: Wang SA, Hyde TB, Mounier-Jack S, Brenzel L, Favin M, Gordon WS, Shearer JC, Mantel CF, Arora N, Durrheim D. New vaccine introductions: Assessing the impact and the opportunities for immunization and health systems strengthening. *Vaccine* 2013; 31 Supplement: B122-B128 (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.vaccine.2012.10.116>).

programmatic, economic and financial feasibility; and impact on the immunization programme and on the overall health system;

- To guide the planning of a smooth vaccine introduction;
- To suggest ways to use the opportunity provided by the introduction of the vaccine to strengthen immunization and health systems.

Who can use this document?

- Country-level decision-makers in the health sector and other government sectors;
- National immunization technical advisory groups;
- Immunization programme managers;
- Immunization advisors at the national, regional and global levels (e.g., from WHO, UNICEF, local and international NGOs);
- Partners and donors that support immunization activities in countries.

When do you need this document?

- When deciding if and when introducing a vaccine into an immunization programme is appropriate and feasible;
- After deciding to introduce a vaccine – to assist in planning the introduction in ways that strengthen the immunization programme and overall health system.

How can you use this document?

- As a technical tool to plan, implement and monitor the vaccine introduction;
- As a resource to readily access key guidelines and tools for specific vaccines and topics (through web links).

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