Hib Vaccine Standing Order: Frequently Asked Questions for Providers

Background and Recommendations

Why am I learning about vaccinating adults for Hib now?

Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) vaccination is routinely recommended for certain immunocompromised adults. Washington is experiencing an ongoing outbreak of Hib among adults, particularly among people experiencing homelessness or housing instability and people who use nonprescribed substances.

In response to the increase in invasive Hib disease among adults in Washington, the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) has established a statewide standing order to make Hib vaccine available to people who may be at increased risk for severe disease. The standing order allows qualified health care professionals to vaccinate eligible people without an individual prescription.

For additional context, a 2026 CDC MMWR describes recent clusters of invasive Hib disease among adults in Alaska, Oregon, and Washington. Of 40 patients without documented Hib vaccination, 35 were born before Hib vaccine was routinely available for children.

What national or association recommendations does the Hib vaccine standing order follow?

The Hib vaccine standing order is an outbreak-specific state public health intervention and expands Hib vaccination beyond routine national recommendations.

Routine national recommendations for Hib vaccination include children younger than 5 and for older children and adults in certain circumstances, such as those receiving a hematopoietic stem cell transplant. As a part of the outbreak response, the standing order expands Hib vaccine access to those who may be at increased risk of invasive Hib disease.

Can I administer the Hib vaccine at the same time as other vaccines, like the flu shot?

Yes. Hib vaccine may be administered during the same visit as other recommended vaccines, including the influenza or COVID-19 vaccine.

Administer each vaccine at a different injection site and do not mix vaccines in the same syringe unless specifically approved for that use.

Is the standing order a vaccine mandate?

No. The standing order does not require anyone to receive the Hib vaccine. The purpose is to provide eligible adults with access to the vaccine if they choose to receive it.

Documentation, Eligibility, and Coverage

What if an adult has received Hib vaccine before?

Eligible adults should receive one dose of the Hib vaccine under the standing order if they have not already received a dose under the standing order, regardless of their previous Hib vaccination history.

Do patients need to provide a copy of the standing order to receive the vaccine?

No. Patients do not need to bring a copy of the standing order to receive the vaccine.

DOH recommends that pharmacies and other facilities keep a printed copy of the standing order on-site or provide staff with a digital copy or link. This can help ensure staff are aware of the standing order and understand any procedures for vaccinating eligible patients. Having this information readily available can also help prevent confusion or delays.

Do patients need to show ID when using the standing order at a pharmacy?

Patients may need to show identification and insurance information, as pharmacies commonly request these when administering vaccines. Providers should also screen patients for medical conditions or other factors that may affect whether they can safely receive the vaccine.

Will patients need documentation to prove they are at risk?

No, patients do not need to provide proof of eligibility. Providers should use the following criteria to determine eligibility under the standing order.

Adults ages 18 and older who self-report or have documentation of at least one of the following risk factors should receive one dose:

- Homelessness during the past year.
- A history of recurrent episodes of homelessness across the lifespan, or prolonged homelessness lasting 12 months or longer.
- Unstable housing during the past year, such as:
    - Transitional, supportive, or low-income housing.
    - Congregate housing, defined as 10 or more unrelated people sharing a living or sleeping space.
    - Temporarily staying with friends or family, sometimes called “couch surfing.”
- Recurring nonprescription use of fentanyl or methamphetamine during the past year.

The following adults ages 18 and older may receive one dose based on shared clinical decision-making. Shared clinical decision-making should take into consideration additional risk factors such as underlying health conditions,

crowded living conditions, or other factors that may increase the risk of invasive Hib disease:

- Contacts of adults with invasive Hib disease. Examples include people in the patient's social and substance use network, and people who share accommodations with the patient, including contacts and staff at shelters or single-room occupancy housing.
- In-person staff and volunteers who have frequent close contact with clients at shelters, other service locations for people experiencing homelessness or housing instability, and syringe service programs.

Providers do not need to verify a patient's housing status, substance use, employment, or other risk factors before administering vaccine. A patient's self-reports that they meet one of the eligible criterion is sufficient.

To reduce stigma, consider asking if the patient meets any of the eligibility criteria as a whole, rather than asking if they meet each criterion individually.

What does shared clinical decision-making mean for contacts and staff?

Shared clinical decision-making means the provider and patient discuss the potential benefits and risks of vaccination and decide together whether vaccination is appropriate.

Consider additional risk factors, such as underlying health conditions, crowded living conditions, or other factors that may increase the risk of invasive Hib disease.

Can a patient receive more than one dose under the standing order?

No. The standing order is intended to provide one dose per eligible adult as part of the outbreak response.

Eligible adults should receive one dose under the standing order if they have not already received a dose under this order, regardless of their previous Hib vaccination history.

Which Hib vaccines can I use?

Use any of the following FDA-approved monovalent Hib conjugate vaccines:

- PedvaxHIB
- ActHIB
- Hiberix

Is there a cost for the vaccine?

The standing order provides access to Hib vaccine but does not cover its cost. The patient cost depends on their insurance coverage and where they receive the vaccine.

- **Uninsured:** Patients are responsible for the cost unless they receive the vaccine through a program or clinic that offers it at no cost.
- **Private insurance:** Patients can contact their health plan administrator or the Office of the Insurance Commissioner to confirm coverage.
- **Washington Apple Health (Medicaid):** Covers vaccines for members, including children, adults, and pregnant people.
- **Medicare:** Vaccines are covered under Part B as a preventive service.

Dispensing and Administration

I'm a pharmacist. Whose name, NPI number, and address do I list as the prescribing physician when using the standing order?

The standing order functions like an individual prescription issued in the recipient's name. Pharmacists may list DOH's State Health Officer for the standing order:

Tao Sheng Kwan-Gett, MD MPH
NPI number: 1225130941
Address: P.O. Box 47890, Olympia, WA 98504-7890

When does the standing order expire?

The standing order has no set expiration date. It remains in effect until Dr. Kwan-Gett revokes it or no longer serves as the Secretary of Health's designee.

Are pharmacies required to dispense and administer Hib vaccine under the standing order?

Yes. Under state law, pharmacies are required to dispense and administer Hib vaccine under the standing order, subject to the same requirements and exceptions that apply to other valid prescriptions.

The standing order is a lawfully written prescription. Under WAC 246-945-415(2), pharmacies have a duty to deliver lawfully prescribed drugs unless an exception in WAC 246-945-415(2), (3), or (4) applies.

Having a collaborative drug therapy agreement (CDTA) in place for Hib vaccines does not relieve a pharmacy of its duty to dispense and administer Hib vaccine under the standing order.

Liability

The standing order expands Hib vaccine eligibility beyond routine recommendations. Does this conflict with CDC recommendations or FDA licensure? What is my liability if I give this vaccine off label?

Providers are subject to the same professional liability and malpractice standards that apply to their other clinical decisions.

Off-label prescribing is a common in health care. Providers prescribe about one in five medications for an off-label use. Health care professionals use their clinical judgment to determine appropriate care for their patients.

Does this standing order provide additional liability protection?

No. The standing order does not provide additional liability protection. The same professional liability and malpractice standards apply to your clinical decisions, regardless of whether you administer Hib vaccine under the standing order.

References

Information About Other Ongoing Outbreaks

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