

Communication Toolkit: Introduction



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August is National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM). Immunizations represent one of the greatest public health accomplishments of the 20th century. The purpose of NIAM is to celebrate the benefits of vaccination and highlight the importance of vaccination for people of all ages.

To assist with your communication efforts during NIAM and beyond, the National Public Health Information Coalition (NPHIC), in collaboration with CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, has developed a communication toolkit. The toolkit is designed to help public information officers, immunization program managers, health care professionals, coalitions, advocates, parents, partners and individuals communicate about the importance of immunizations during August and throughout the year.

Four messages are central throughout the toolkit:

- Vaccines protect against serious diseases.
- These diseases still exist and outbreaks do occur.
- Vaccines are recommended throughout our lives.
- Vaccines are very safe.

About the Toolkit

The toolkit is structured to provide targeted messages/materials for various stages of the lifespan. The suggested themes for this year are:

- July/August: Ready for school? Check those vaccine records. (school-aged children)
- July 31-August 6: A healthy start begins with on-time vaccination (babies and young children)
- August 7-13: Protect yourself and pass protection on to your baby (pregnant women)
- August 14-20: Vaccines are not just for kids (adults)
- August 21-27: Ensure a healthy future with vaccines (preteens and teens)

The toolkit contains a number of resources for each week:

- Sample key messages
- Specific vaccine information
- Frequently asked questions
- Sample news releases and drop-in articles
- Sample social media messages
- Logos and graphics
- Web links and resources

Suggestions for Using the Toolkit

We invite you to use the toolkit to design your own promotions, mix and match, copy or adapt the contents to take advantage of the local news and issues.

Use key messages to get your point across.

Sample Key Messages: Use key messages as the basis for talking points, presentations, media interviews, news releases, social media messages or other outreach materials. Localize and tailor your messages with information or stories from your own organization or community.

Use information in the toolkits to educate the public.

Specific Vaccine Information: Use specific vaccine information to update existing materials or develop new materials to educate people about vaccines and their importance.

Frequently Asked Questions: Frequently asked questions can be a helpful tool for developing web content, fact sheets, newsletters, and other educational materials to answer your constituents' questions about vaccines.

Generate news with media materials.

Sample News Releases: Customize sample news releases with information, stories or events happening in your community. Submit news releases, articles or op-eds to local news and partner organizations to publish, post on websites, or share through social media. Distribute or make available electronically to key partners and decision-makers.

Ready-to-Publish Articles: Submit sample articles to local news and partner organizations to publish, post on websites, or share through social media. Increase the chances that the article will be picked up for publication by localizing the story – feature a quote from a state or local spokesperson (e.g., state health officer or immunization program manager), use local or state statistics to reinforce your messages. Provide details on where people in your community can go for more information or to find and pay for vaccines, for example.

A media outreach toolkit for NIAM can be found at: www.nphic.org/niam-media.

Create buzz with social media.

Sample Facebook Posts: The toolkit provides a selection of sample posts, many with suggested links. Use these as they are—or as a starting point to customize and localize your own posts. These messages are ideally 250 characters or less to allow the entire post to be viewed in the newsfeed.

Sample Tweets: The toolkit provides a selection of sample tweets, many with suggested links. Use these as they are—or as a starting point to customize and localize your own tweets.

Check the “Web Links and Resources” section of each toolkit for more ideas of links you can use to illustrate or enliven your social media messages. CDC’s Guide to Writing for Social

Media is a great online resource at:

www.cdc.gov/socialmedia/tools/guidelines/pdf/guidetowritingforsocialmedia.pdf.

Highlight NIAM on your website and social media accounts with logos and graphics.

You can find a variety of logos, banners, posters and social media graphics at

<https://www.nphic.org/niam-logosbanners>.

Link to credible resources.

Web Links & Resources: Each section of the toolkit contains a listing of web links and resources from CDC and many other coalitions and partner organizations that are specific to the weekly theme (babies and pregnant women, school kids, young adults, and adults). CDC's Immunization website (in English and Spanish) has a wealth of information and resources, including immunization schedules, podcasts, videos, posters, infographics, web content that can be syndicated and more: www.cdc.gov/vaccines.