PublicHealth
WELLINGTON-DUFFERIN-GUELPH
Stay Well.

ADVISORY

SUBJECT:	Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI)
Date:	July 15, 2021
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To:	Primary Care Providers and Pharmacists
From:	Dr. Matthew Tenenbaum, Associate Medical Officer of Health

Due to the rapid pace of COVID-19 immunization in our community, WDGPH has been receiving high volumes of adverse event following immunization (AEFI) reports. This has increased the caseload for our AEFI team. If you have submitted a report, please be aware that an investigation is underway, and you will receive client-specific recommendations as soon as the investigation is complete.

To expedite review of AEFI reports and avoid requests for further information from your office, Public Health is requesting that you include the following information with your AEFI report:
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- Complete medical history including list of medications and known allergies
- A thorough description of the event from time of onset to date of assessment
- Results of laboratory tests or other investigations ordered due to the AEFI
- Results of any specialist consultations/referrals, if applicable
- Description of treatments or interventions provided (outpatient or inpatient setting)

These details should be included in Sections 5-7 of Public Health Ontario's updated AEFI form. A copy of the recent AEFI form can be found here: Report of Adverse Event Following Immunization (AEFI) Requisition (publichealthontario.ca)

Please fax completed AEFI reports and supporting documentation to: 1-855-934-5463

Determining when an AEFI is Reportable

AEFIs should generally be reported when an unexpected or untoward event occurs after immunization, which could plausibly be related to the vaccine. Of particular importance are events that:

- Result in death, are life-threatening, require in-patient hospitalization or prolong an existing hospitalization, result in persistent or significant disability/incapacity, or in a congenital anomaly/birth defect
- May require medical intervention to prevent an outcome as described above, including but not limited to:
    - Acute disseminated encephalomyelitis (ADEM)
    - Events managed as anaphylaxis
    - Encephalitis/encephalopathy

  - Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS)
  - Intussusception
  - Meningitis
  - Myelitis/transverse myelitis
  - Thrombocytopenia
- Are currently under enhanced surveillance, such as:
  - Thrombosis with Thrombocytopenia Syndrome (TTS)/Vaccine-Induced Immune Thrombotic Thrombocytopenia (VITT) following the AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD vaccine
  - Myocarditis or pericarditis following the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines

Some common or mild events do not need to be reported. These include:

- Fever that is not accompanied by any other symptoms
- Injection site reactions that last less than 4 days
- Vasovagal syncope without injury
- Events that are clearly attributed to other causes

Events should only be reported as “Other Severe OR Unusual Events” if they are severe (e.g., result in death, hospitalization, disability, or congenital malformation) or unusual (e.g., not previously identified). These should be clinically intriguing or epidemiologically interesting events and usually require medical intervention to meet the criteria for reporting. Additionally, events that are better categorized as another AEFI (Section 3) or an adverse event of special interest (AESI) (Section 4) should be reported under those categories.

Public Health Recommendations in Response to AEFIs

After investigating a reported AEFI, WDGPH will provide recommendations regarding whether and how your patient ought to receive additional doses of vaccine. In many circumstances, an individual who had an AEFI after their first dose can safely receive their second dose.

In some circumstances, WDGPH will recommend that you refer your patient to a specialist before receiving subsequent vaccine doses. For example, WDGPH may recommend an allergy/immunology referral after reporting a possible allergic reaction.

If the specialist recommends against further immunization, please notify WDGPH at the contact information below. WDGPH will update your patient’s record in the provincial COVaxON database, which will advise future immunizers that your patient has a contraindication.

For more information, please contact:

Name: WDGPH Clinical Services
Phone: 1-800-265-7293 ext. 4744
Website: www.wdgpublichealth.ca