

**Arizona Department of Health Services
Vaccine Safety Program**

Vaccine Adverse Events Reporting System (VAERS)

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) closely monitor the safety of vaccines used in the United States. One of the ways is through a Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS), which is a reporting system to identify significant adverse events after vaccination.
- VAERS cannot determine a cause and effect relationship since the event may have occurred as a coincidence. However, the VAERS reporting allows there to be further evaluation to see if there *could* be a cause and effect relationship.
- All private and public healthcare providers are required by law ([42 USC 300aa-25](#)) to report to VAERS about any conditions on the [VAERS Reportable Events Table](#), vaccine adverse events that are listed in the manufacturer's package insert, and clinically significant or unexpected events following vaccination.
- Clinically significant adverse events after vaccination are defined as death, hospitalization, life-threatening illness, persistent or significant disability/incapacity, and other medically important conditions.
- VAERS reports may be filed in several ways: securely online, by mail, or by fax. VAERS report forms are available [online](#) or VAERS forms can be obtained by calling 1-800-822-7967.
- After a VAERS report is received, CDC VAERS staff members collect additional information as needed by contacting the reporter and/or obtaining information from other sources such as hospital records. The information from the VAERS report is added to a VAERS data bank which is further analyzed to look for trends or suggestions of potential vaccine safety concerns.
- Information from individual VAERS reports are available to the general public about 6 weeks after CDC receives a VAERS report. The VAERS reports have all personal identifying information removed before they are added to the publically available VAERS data base. This VAERS information can be accessed through the CDC Wide-ranging Online Data for Epidemiologic Research (WONDER) public database and can be downloaded from <http://vaers.hhs.gov/data/index>
- Anyone can submit a VAERS report. This includes healthcare providers, vaccine providers, public health officials, vaccine manufacturers, vaccinated persons, or caretakers of vaccinated persons.

Arizona Department of Health Services' Program to Monitor for Adverse Events Following Vaccines

- The Arizona Immunization Program Office has a designated VAERS Coordinator for the state. The VAERS Coordinator
 - Functions as the Arizona point of contact between CDC, local health departments, tribal health departments, Indian Health Services, health care providers, and the general public to provide assistance with vaccine-related adverse event reporting and follow up as needed.
 - Performs a quarterly review of the Arizona VAERS data to identify evaluate state specific VAERS information.
 - Disseminates information to public health officials, health care providers, and the public about reporting adverse events after vaccination, and informing them about any vaccine safety concerns as needed.
- If a healthcare provider or person is unable to report online to VAERS, a completed VAERS report form may be sent to the Arizona VAERS Coordinator, who will transmit the information to VAERS. The VAERS form should be sent to: Arizona Department of Health Services, Arizona Immunization Office, Attention: VAERS Coordinator, 150 N. 18th Ave., #120, Phoenix, AZ 85007, or faxed to (602) 364-3285.
- For additional questions about VAERS or adverse events after vaccination, contact the Arizona Immunization Program Office at (602) 364-3856.

Additional Information on Vaccine Safety for Health Care Providers and the General Public

- VAERS website for adverse events reporting. <https://vaers.hhs.gov/index>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): Vaccine Safety. <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/index.html>
- CDC. *Epidemiology and Prevention of Vaccine-Preventable Diseases*. Hamborsky J, Kroger A, Wolfe S, eds. 13th ed. Washington, D.C. Public Health Foundation, 2015. Chapter 4: Vaccine Safety. <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/pinkbook/downloads/safety.pdf>
- CDC. *Manual for the Surveillance of Vaccine-Preventable Diseases*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, GA, 2011. Chapter 21: Surveillance for Adverse Events Following Immunization Using the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System. <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/surv-manual/chpt21-surv-adverse-events.html>
- Immunization Action Coalition. Vaccine Safety. <http://www.vaccineinformation.org/safety.asp>
- John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Institute for Vaccine Safety. <http://www.vaccinesafety.edu>
- The Institute of Medicine. *Adverse Effects of Vaccines: Evidence for Causality*. The National Academies Press, Washington, D.C. 2011. <http://www.iom.edu/Reports/2011/Adverse-Effects-of-Vaccines-Evidence-and-Causality.aspx>.