The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) listed immunization among the top 10 public health achievements of the 20th century. However, there is the threat of disease reemergence as populations go unvaccinated due in part to a lack of awareness, fear of side effects, busy schedules, and competing demands. As a pharmacist, you can confront these challenges by proactively identifying and educating patients who are eligible for vaccination.

**Identifying Patients Eligible for Tdap**

The CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends all patients 10 years of age and older who have not received tetanus and diphtheria toxoids and acellular pertussis vaccine (Tdap) or for whom pertussis vaccination status is unknown receive 1 dose of Tdap followed by a tetanus and diphtheria toxoids (Td) booster every 10 years. Tdap should be administered regardless of when a tetanus or diphtheria toxoid-containing vaccine was last received. The following individuals should also be assessed to receive the Tdap vaccine if they:

- **Are Pregnant**
  
  Pregnant women should get a dose of Tdap during each pregnancy, preferably during the earlier part of gestational weeks 27 through 36, regardless of time since prior Td or Tdap vaccination.

  For new mothers who have never received Tdap before or whose vaccination status is unknown, Tdap is recommended in the immediate postpartum period before discharge from the hospital or birthing center.

- **Are Healthcare Personnel**

  Receiving recommended vaccines is an essential prevention practice for healthcare personnel. However, in 2014, the CDC found that less than half (42.1%) of healthcare personnel had received Tdap vaccination in the prior 9 years. Healthcare personnel may be eligible for Tdap vaccination, if not already vaccinated.

- **Will Be Around Infants**

  It is important that everyone who will be in close contact with an infant is up-to-date with their pertussis vaccination (DTaP or Tdap, depending on age). New parents and grandparents may be interested and eligible for Tdap vaccination, if not already vaccinated.

- **Require Wound Prophylaxis**

  Patients should take precautions against tetanus if there is no evidence of tetanus toxoid-containing vaccine in the previous 5 years. Tdap can be administered for wound prophylaxis to patients 10 years of age and older who have not previously had Tdap. (If the patient has previously received Tdap, then Td is recommended instead.) People who might be more susceptible to puncture wounds may be interested and eligible for Tdap vaccination, if not already vaccinated.

**Who Should Not Get Vaccinated?**

- Individuals who have ever had a life-threatening allergic reaction after a previous dose of any diphtheria, tetanus, or pertussis vaccine, or who have a severe allergy to any part of this vaccine, should not receive Tdap vaccine.

- Anyone who has experienced a coma, decreased level of consciousness, or long, repeated seizures within 7 days after a previous dose of tetanus or diphtheria toxoid or acellular pertussis-containing vaccine, should not receive Tdap, unless a cause other than the vaccine was found for these reactions.
What Are Some Additional Precautions?
Prior to administration, consult with patients’ physician if they:

- have uncontrolled seizures, progressive encephalopathy, or another unstable neurological disorder
- have a history of Guillain-Barré Syndrome
- have a history of Arthus-type hypersensitivity reactions
- have had severe pain or swelling after any vaccine containing diphtheria, tetanus or pertussis

Please refer to the prescribing information for product-specific contraindications, warnings and precautions, and adverse reactions. Please include the Vaccine Information Statement (VIS) in your discussion with patients about vaccination.

You Play a Vital Role in Disease Prevention
Many adults in the United States do not have a primary care provider and only half receive basic preventive care services. However, nearly all Americans (93%) live within 5 miles of a community retail pharmacy, offering an accessible solution. As a pharmacist, you can help patients without a primary care provider and counsel them on recommended vaccinations, including Tdap.

References: