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## Adverse events following immunization

In Canada, adverse events following immunization (AEFIs) are reported to maintain the safety of vaccines.<sup>1</sup> The Praxis article on shoulder injury related to vaccine administration in the January issue of *Canadian Family Physician* highlighted an example of a possible AEFI that family physicians should likely assess for report to public health.<sup>2</sup>

An AEFI is any untoward medical occurrence that follows immunization and that does not necessarily have a causal relationship with the administration of the vaccine. It might be any unfavourable or unintended sign, abnormal laboratory finding, symptom, or disease.<sup>3</sup>

Requirements of family physicians to report AEFIs depend on the jurisdiction in which they practise, but AEFIs are typically reported to local or regional public health authorities for initial assessment when they have a temporal association with a vaccine and no other clear cause.<sup>1</sup>

In Ontario, for example, family physicians are required to report AEFIs to their local Medical Officer

of Health, and shoulder injury related to vaccine, as described in the Praxis article, would likely be considered reportable.<sup>4</sup>

For more information on AEFIs and reporting requirements, family physicians can contact public health in their jurisdiction. Family physicians play an important role in immunizing people living in Canada, and also have a role in keeping immunization safe: appropriate AEFI reporting is part of this.

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### Competing interests

None declared

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