Despite the best efforts of healthcare providers, adult vaccine coverage rates in the United States remain low.\(^1\) Patient adherence to vaccine series that require multiple doses, such as hepatitis A and hepatitis B, can be especially difficult.\(^2\) One way that you can contribute to improving public health is by helping non-vaccinated or incompletely vaccinated patients finish their series.

The first step in improving vaccine series completion is to be aware of common lapses in vaccine coverage. For example, in 2014, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimated that only 24.5% of US adults 19 years of age and older had received 3 or more doses of hepatitis B vaccine and 20.1% of adults 19 years of age and older had received tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (Tdap) vaccination, in the prior 9 years.\(^1\)

Engaging your patients with some simple *Did You Know* questions can help start a conversation about the importance of completing a vaccine series.

- **Did you know that some adults have difficulty completing a multidose vaccination series?**\(^2\)
  
  This situation represents a significant public health problem because missing doses of a vaccine may result in incomplete immune response to the vaccination.\(^2\) To get the best results from vaccination, it’s important to finish the entire series.

- **Did you know there are guidelines for what to do if a patient is unsure of their vaccination status?**\(^3\)
  
  It is not uncommon to be unsure of your vaccination status.\(^3\) Only dated written records provide adequate evidence of vaccination. If records cannot be found in a reasonable time to confirm vaccination status, talk to your pharmacist about what you should do.

By identifying, educating, and vaccinating patients with non-vaccination or an incomplete vaccine series, you have the opportunity to help make a significant impact on the public’s health.

Pharmacists should consult CDC recommendations on immunization and use their clinical judgment before advising patients.

**References:**