

Talking about

Adult Vaccination



Protect yourself and your family.
Protect your school.
Protect your community.



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WHY

Why do adults need vaccinations?

Most adults don't have the full protection of available vaccines. Some adults may not have been vaccinated as children or may not have received all of their vaccinations. Even if you were vaccinated as a child, many new vaccines have become available in recent years.

Immunity from childhood vaccination may begin to fade over time, requiring booster doses of some vaccines. Older adults may be more susceptible to serious disease caused by common infections such as influenza (flu) and pneumococcal disease (pneumonia).

Do you think getting vaccinated isn't worth the inconvenience or cost?

Think again.

Vaccine-preventable illnesses cause more deaths in American adults each year than either breast cancer or traffic accidents.¹



VACCINATIONS

Vaccinations to protect adults are available for:

hepatitis A

hepatitis B

human papillomavirus (HPV)

influenza (flu)

measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR)

meningococcal disease (meningitis)

pneumococcal disease (pneumonia)

tetanus (lock jaw), diphtheria, and

pertussis (whooping cough)

varicella (chickenpox)

zoster (shingles)²

This booklet will help you learn more about which vaccines you may need. All vaccine recommendations in this booklet are based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) Adult Immunization Schedule.³

WHO

Who needs to be vaccinated?

All adults should work with their healthcare provider to determine whether they are up-to-date on their vaccinations for illnesses such as flu and pertussis. In addition, the following groups should consider their particular risk when deciding whether to vaccinate:

- adults at risk for exposure to bloodborne illnesses on the job;
- adults older than 50;
- adults with chronic illnesses (such as heart, lung, liver, kidney or sickle cell disease, diabetes, cancer, HIV/AIDS or a removed or damaged spleen); and
- women (especially those who are pregnant or planning to become pregnant).



With their healthcare provider, adults should decide which vaccines they need on the basis of their general health, age, lifestyle and occupation.⁴

Factors related to your general health that could impact your need for vaccination include: chronic illness, pregnancy, a history of a sexually transmitted disease, and/or immune system suppression.

Age is an important factor because some vaccines, such as those for shingles, flu, and pneumonia are strongly recommended if you are older, while others like HPV are currently approved only for women 26 and younger.

Lifestyle can also impact your need for vaccination. If you were born outside the U.S. or travel internationally to countries where vaccine-preventable diseases are more common, you may require additional vaccination. Also, if you are a man who has sex with men, if you are not in a mutually monogamous relationship, or if you inject drugs, these activities could increase your risk for viral hepatitis.

An Adult Vaccination Screening Form that you can fill out and take with you to the doctor is available online at <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/schedules/>

WHAT

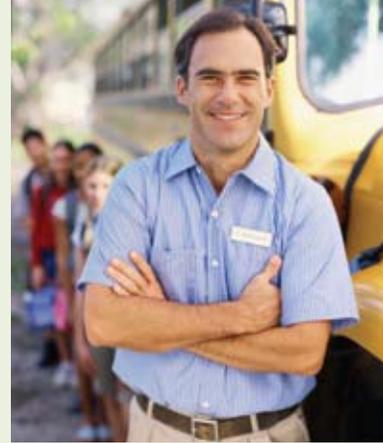
What else should I know?

Certain populations and occupations carry a greater need for vaccination.

College students living in dormitories and individuals who work in institutional settings, such as colleges and universities, have a greater risk of meningitis.

Parents and teachers of young children, as well as healthcare workers such as school nurses, should pay particular attention to whether they are up-to-date on their vaccinations: tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis; measles, mumps, and rubella; varicella; and influenza.

In addition, those at risk for exposure to blood on the job should protect themselves against hepatitis B infection.



Who shouldn't be vaccinated?

Many vaccines are given in a series of multiple doses. If you've had a serious reaction requiring medical attention to a previous dose of a particular vaccine, you shouldn't continue the series. Tell your doctor if you have any severe (life threatening) food or drug allergies before receiving vaccinations. In general, people who are moderately or severely ill at the time they are scheduled to receive a vaccination should wait until they recover.

In addition, **women who are pregnant and adults with suppressed immune systems** should not receive the varicella (chickenpox) vaccine, the zoster (shingles) vaccine, or the measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine. Pregnant women should not receive the HPV vaccine.⁵

WHICH

Which vaccines do most adults need?

Most adults, especially parents and those who work with children, should get the flu shot each year. They should also review whether they are immune to chickenpox and when they were last immunized for tetanus (lock jaw), diphtheria, and pertussis (whooping cough). Depending upon your lifestyle and occupation, you may also need the hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and/or meningococcal vaccines.

If you work in a school, you might be exposed to vaccine-preventable diseases carried by unvaccinated students. Protecting yourself through vaccination is also the best way to prevent the spread of these illnesses to children and adults in your community who may not have been immunized.



Influenza (flu)

Flu was responsible for more than 36,000 deaths in the U.S. in 2006, and together with pneumonia, flu was the 8th most common cause of death in that year.⁶ Flu deaths typically correspond to the severity of the flu season, but it is difficult to predict in advance how severe a particular flu season will be. Most flu deaths each year are among people 65 and older, making it especially important for this age group to get vaccinated.

Each year, researchers identify the three strains of the flu that they think will be most common during a given season and formulate the flu vaccine for that year. Getting the vaccination each year is the best way to prevent the flu.

Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis (Td and Tdap)

The Tdap vaccine protects adults against tetanus (lockjaw), diphtheria, and pertussis (whooping cough). Tetanus is rare but can be life threatening.

Diphtheria is a severe infection which can block the airways. It is also rare in the U.S. because of high immunization rates, but epidemics have occurred abroad in recent decades.⁹

Whooping cough cases are on the rise in the U.S., especially in states where parents can easily exempt their children from school vaccination requirements.¹⁰

WHICH

Which other vaccines may be needed?

Adults already immunized for tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (usually as children) should receive booster shots of Td every 10 years to ensure that they remain protected against the first two illnesses. The CDC recommends that a one-time booster shot of Tdap replace one of these Td boosters to ensure additional protection against whooping cough. Individuals who have never been immunized for these diseases should receive two doses of Td and one dose of Tdap, then booster shots of Td every 10 years.¹¹



Chickenpox (Varicella)

Chickenpox can be a serious illness if you are an adult. About 1 in 50 adults who get chickenpox is hospitalized.⁷ The varicella vaccine is 70–90 percent effective in preventing chickenpox. If given before or within 72 hours after exposure, it can greatly lessen the severity of a case of chickenpox should an infection occur.⁸

If you have already had chickenpox, you do not need the vaccine. But if you have not developed immunity (either through prior illness or vaccination), CDC recommends you be vaccinated if your health allows.

WHAT

What about older adults and those with chronic illness?

Adults age 50 and older and those with chronic illnesses (such as heart, lung, liver, kidney or sickle cell disease, diabetes, cancer, HIV/AIDS, or a removed or damaged spleen) are particularly vulnerable to vaccine-preventable disease.¹² This is because immunity fades as we age and/or because of a weakened immune system or poorer overall health.

The CDC recommends that these individuals get a flu vaccination each year, one-time pneumonia and shingles vaccinations, and tetanus boosters every 10 years.



Influenza and Pneumococcal Disease (Flu and Pneumonia)

CDC recommends that people aged 50 and older get a flu shot each year, while pneumonia vaccination (usually a single dose) is recommended for people older than 65.

Most flu deaths each year are among people 65 and older.

Pneumococcal disease can cause infections of the lungs, blood, and brain and can be fatal.¹³ This disease is one of the leading causes of vaccine-preventable death in the U.S. and is especially dangerous for older adults.¹⁴

WHAT

What about older adults and those with chronic illness?

Shingles (Zoster)

Shingles is an extremely painful skin rash that can cause blisters and lasts for 3 to 5 weeks.¹⁵ It is caused by the same virus that causes chickenpox, which can stay inactive in the body for many years and cause a case of shingles later in life.

Almost 1 million Americans, half of whom are older than 60, get shingles each year.¹⁶

You should get vaccinated for shingles if you are older than 60, even if you have had a previous case of chickenpox or shingles.

The vaccine is effective in preventing shingles in about half of those vaccinated, and it can reduce the pain of shingles in those who have an outbreak.

While most people age 60 and older should get vaccinated for shingles, you **should not** if you:

- have a weak immune system,
- are receiving a drug (such as steroids) that could weaken your immune system,
- are receiving cancer treatment,
- have a history of bone marrow or lymph system cancer, and/or
- have active, untreated tuberculosis.¹⁷

Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis (Td and Tdap)

Though tetanus occurs rarely in the U.S., adults 50 years old or older account for 70 percent of tetanus infections.¹⁸

Older adults who don't know whether they received a tetanus vaccination as children should receive the primary series of three shots as well as booster shots (Td) every 10 years up to age 64.¹⁹

The CDC recommends that a one-time booster shot of Tdap replace a single dose of Td to ensure additional protection against pertussis (whooping cough).



WHICH

Which vaccines do women need?

Women 26 and younger

CDC recommends that women ages 26 and younger who are not pregnant receive the HPV vaccine, which prevents the strains of the human papillomavirus that cause most cases of cervical cancer.²⁰ About 10,000 women per year in the U.S. will develop cervical cancer, and about 500,000 women will experience serious cervical lesions that may need treatment.²¹

Though the vaccine is highly effective in preventing HPV, it does not protect against all types of the virus that cause cancer, so women should continue to get regular Pap tests even after vaccination.²²

Women considering pregnancy

Women of childbearing age who may become pregnant should consider their risk for chickenpox and rubella (German measles). If you have no proof of immunity to these infections (either through prior illness or vaccination) CDC recommends you get vaccinated **before becoming pregnant**.

Pregnant women who get chickenpox shortly before or after giving birth can have babies with severe complications; one-third of the babies born to infected mothers will die if they do not receive immediate treatment.²³ Rubella during pregnancy can cause birth defects.²⁴ **Women should not receive the chickenpox or MMR vaccines during pregnancy.**



Pregnant Women

Women who will be pregnant during the flu season should consider getting the flu vaccine while pregnant. Recent research shows that when the mother is immunized, some protection against the flu may pass to the unborn child.²⁵

Pregnant women should not receive the nasal spray vaccine, however, as this contains weakened live virus.²⁶

CDC recommends that pregnant women who have not had a Td booster in 2 or more years have a Tdap vaccination after delivery to protect their newborns from pertussis (whooping cough) exposure. Infants are particularly susceptible to pertussis before they receive their full series of vaccinations.

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RESOURCES

This booklet is just a start. Talk to your healthcare provider about your health status and specific risks to find out which vaccinations you should receive and to help you make an informed decision.



The National Education Association Health Information Network (NEA HIN) is dedicated to improving health, safety and student achievement by providing school employees with vital, effective and timely health information. A non-profit organization founded in 1987, NEA HIN develops and implements programs that promote the practice of healthy behaviors and decision-making both inside and outside of the school environment.

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For additional information, see:

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,
Adult Vaccination Information**
<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/spec-grps/adults.htm>

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,
Vaccination Schedule for Adults**
<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/schedules>

Immunization Action Coalition
<http://www.immunize.org>

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