



## Immunization awareness

### Stay current with your shots

As adults, there are many things we should do to stay healthy. We need to eat right, exercise and get enough rest. We need to make time for important health screenings. Another thing we should do, but sometimes neglect, is keep up with recommended vaccines.

Adults who aren't up to date on their shots are at greater risk of getting and spreading certain diseases, such as flu, chicken pox, measles and whooping cough.

The amount of protection from vaccination varies from person to person, but immunization is the best defense for everyone against many serious, and preventable, illnesses.

It is especially important for older adults and people with chronic health conditions such as heart disease, asthma and diabetes to get vaccinated, because they are at higher risk for complications from diseases.

If you're not sure which vaccines are right for you, talk to your doctor to see what he or she recommends.

*Source: National Public Health Information Coalition*

### Trivia time:

#### How did vaccines get their name?

*Answer: When he developed the world's first vaccine for smallpox in 1796, Dr. Edward Jenner made it from the cowpox virus. He called the process vaccination based on the Latin word for cow, "vacca."*

### Which vaccines should you get?

Vaccination is important because it helps prevent the spread of disease, especially to the most vulnerable among us, including young children, the elderly and people with chronic conditions or weakened immune systems. Here's a general guide to the vaccines recommended for American adults:

- All adults, including pregnant women, should get the influenza vaccine each flu season.
- All adults should have one dose of Tdap, which protects against tetanus, diphtheria and whooping cough, if they did not get the vaccine as a teenager.
- Pregnant women should get the Tdap vaccine each time they are pregnant, preferably at 27 to 36 weeks.
- Adults age 60 and older should get the shingles vaccine.
- Adults age 65 and older should receive one or more pneumococcal vaccines.

You may need other vaccines – such as hepatitis A, hepatitis B and HPV – depending on your age, occupation, travel, medical conditions, vaccines you've already received, or other considerations. When in doubt, ask your doctor.

*Source: National Public Health Information Coalition*

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### Get kids caught up on shots at back-to-school physicals

It's just about time for parents to make their back-to-school shopping lists and get kids ready to dust off their backpacks and school books. August is also National Vaccination Awareness Month, which makes it a great time to check if your children are up to date on their shots.

Vaccines protect against a number of serious diseases, including flu, measles and whooping cough. When children are not vaccinated, they are at increased risk for illness and may spread diseases to other people in their classrooms and community. Babies who are too young to be vaccinated and people with weakened immune systems are particularly vulnerable.

Sports physicals and back-to-school checkups are a good time to talk to your child's doctor about which vaccines they should have before the school year begins.

Source: National Public Health Information Coalition

### Trivia time:

*What commonly vaccinated disease has also been called "German measles"?*

*Answer: Rubella, part of the MMR vaccine, got this nickname because so many German doctors were involved in identifying the disease in the 1700s.*

### What you need to know about vaccine safety

Over the years, vaccines have prevented countless illnesses and saved millions of lives. They are thoroughly tested and carefully monitored to make sure they are safe to be given to patients.

- ▶ Side effects are usually mild and temporary.
- ▶ Some people may have allergic reactions to certain vaccines.
- ▶ Serious and long-term side effects are rare.

Talk with your healthcare provider about which vaccines are right for you based on your age, health, job, lifestyle and other factors.

Sources: CDC, National Public Health Information Coalition

### Pop quiz: Test your vaccine smarts

Most adults don't get all the shots they need, leaving them vulnerable to serious illnesses. Guess how many people:

1. 19 or older got a Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis) vaccine:  
 15%  20%  35%
2. 60 or older got a shingles vaccine:  
 28%  43%  62%
3. 19 to 64 who were at high risk got a pneumococcal vaccine:  
 9%  20%  33%
4. 18 or older got a flu shot during the 2014-2015 flu season:  
 27%  44%  62%

Answers: 1. 20% 2. 28% 3. 20% 4. 44%

Sources: CDC, National Public Health Information Coalition

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