

You Never Outgrow Vaccines: Adult Vaccination Fact Sheet



Saving Lives:
Integrating
Vaccines for
Adults Into
Routine Care

Importance of Vaccination

- Vaccines are very effective in preventing the suffering and costs associated with vaccine-preventable infections, such as influenza, pneumococcal disease, human papillomavirus (HPV) and hepatitis B.
- Some of these illnesses do not have a cure, and all can cause tremendous health problems or even death.
- Approximately 50,000 Americans who die every year from vaccine-preventable diseases are adults.

Facts About Vaccine-Preventable Diseases

- **Influenza** causes an average of 36,000 deaths and more than 200,000 hospitalizations in the U.S. every year.
- Approximately 4,500 Americans die from invasive **pneumococcal disease** annually. Pneumococcal bacteria can invade the lungs, bloodstream, brain and spinal cord, resulting in a number of different illnesses, including pneumonia and meningitis.
- Two of the **human papillomavirus (HPV)** strains covered in the HPV vaccine cause about 70 percent of cervical cancers.
- At least half of all sexually active adults will be infected with HPV in their lifetime; 80 percent of all women will be infected by age 50.
- About 90 percent of unvaccinated household contacts of an infected person will catch **chickenpox**.
- Once contracted, there is no specific treatment for **hepatitis B virus**.
- Hepatitis B is a “silent disease” that often affects people without making them feel sick. If you do get sick from hepatitis B, the symptoms may feel like the “flu,” yet, hepatitis B kills over 5,000 Americans each year. It is a leading cause of chronic liver cirrhosis and a known cause of liver cancer.
- About 15 percent of people with **hepatitis A** require hospitalization in the U.S. each year.
- Approximately 20 percent of those with **measles** experience one or more complications. These complications are more common among adults over age 20.
- About one million Americans get **shingles** every year; at least two in 10 will get shingles in their lifetime. While more common among the elderly, shingles can occur in healthy younger people and even in children.
- The pain associated with shingles may begin two to four days before the rash appears and can last for weeks, months or even years after the rash has healed.
- Mothers are the source for nearly one-third of **whooping cough (pertussis)** cases in infants under the age of 1 year. Infants are at greatest risk of death from whooping cough.
- **Tetanus** is commonly called “lock jaw” because it causes muscle spasms and locking of the jaw. Approximately 16 percent of reported cases of tetanus are fatal.

How Often to Get Immunized/How Many Doses

Some vaccines are required annually; others are given just once and provide protection for life. Following are some general guidelines for how often to get each vaccine and how many doses are required:

- **Pneumococcal disease:** vaccine usually given once at age 65 or older (or in adults younger than 65 who smoke or have underlying medical conditions).
- **Human papillomavirus:** women 26 and younger should receive a three-dose series over a six-month period to reduce the risk of cervical cancer.
- **Influenza:** vaccine must be given once yearly, anytime during the influenza season.
- **Tetanus/diphtheria/pertussis (whooping cough):** all adults 19 and older should get one booster dose of tetanus/diphtheria (Td) every 10 years. Adults under age 65 who have never gotten tetanus/diphtheria/pertussis (Tdap) should substitute it for the next booster dose of Td, then continue with a dose of Td every 10 years.
- **Hepatitis B:** three doses are given over a six-month period.
- **Shingles:** one dose of shingles vaccine is recommended for persons 60 and older.

Receiving Simultaneous Vaccinations

- As a general rule, inactivated vaccines, such as Tdap, can be administered at any time before or after other inactivated or live vaccines.
- Influenza and pneumococcal vaccines can be given during one medical visit.
- Hepatitis B vaccine may be administered simultaneously with other vaccines at different injection sites.
- Talk to your health provider about which vaccines you need and when you should receive them.

Vaccine Safety

- Vaccines are among the safest medical products available. Some common side effects are a sore arm (associated only with injected vaccines) or low grade fever.
- The potential risks associated with the diseases these vaccines prevent are much greater than the potential risks associated with the vaccines themselves.
- You cannot “catch” any of the diseases mentioned above from their respective vaccines.

Take Control of Your Health!
**Talk To Your Doctor About Which Vaccinations
You May Need and Make Sure You Have an
Updated Immunization Record on File**

For more information visit www.adultvaccination.org