

Vaccines Aren't Just for Children

Parents may think that vaccines or shots are just for infants and children, but illnesses have no age limits and adults also need protection. There are many vaccines for adults as well and some of them are even more important for adults than for children.

How do vaccines protect us?

When you are exposed to germs, your body makes proteins called antibodies to fight them like soldiers, even in the future. Vaccines are made from germs that cause illnesses, but they are either weaker, dead forms or just pieces of germs which cannot cause illness but can still stimulate your body to produce antibodies.

Which vaccines are recommended?

More than 40,000 adults die each year from three major vaccine-preventable diseases: influenza (flu), pneumococcal infections and hepatitis B. Measles, mumps, rubella, chickenpox, tetanus, diphtheria and hepatitis A also cause a considerable number of illnesses and some deaths among adults. Many adults need to receive vaccines against these illnesses.


Are vaccines safe?

Vaccines are among the most effective and safest medicines. Even so, like other medicines, vaccines may cause side effects such as temporary pain at the injection site or low fever. Side effects are rarely serious.

Where can adults get vaccines?

Immunizations are given in doctors' offices, managed care organizations (HMOs), public health clinics, nursing homes, assisted care facilities, pharmacies and other sites such as health fairs and senior centers. For information on vaccines, ask your health care provider or call the CDC Immunization Hotline at (800) 232-2522 (English), (800) 232-0233 (Español) or visit www.cdc.gov/nip.

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For more information, please contact:
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Recommended Adult Immunization Schedule			
Vaccine	Age Group (in years)		
	19-49	50-64	≥65
Tetanus, diphtheria (Td)	1 dose booster every 10 years		
Influenza	1 dose annually for persons with medical or occupational indications or household contacts of persons with indicators	1 annual dose	
Pneumococcal (polysaccharide)	1 dose for persons with medical or other indications (1 dose revaccination for immunosuppressive conditions)		1 dose for unvaccinated persons 1 dose revaccination
Hepatitis B	3 doses (0, 1-2, 4-6 months) for persons with medical, behavioral, occupational, or other indications		
Hepatitis A	2 doses (0, 6-12 months) for persons with medical, behavioral, occupational, or other indications		
Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)	1 dose if MMR vaccination history is unreliable; 2 doses for persons with occupational, geographic or other indications		
Varicella	2 doses (0, 4-8 weeks) for persons who are susceptible		
Meningococcal (polysaccharide)	1 dose for persons with medical or other indications		

For all persons in this age group
 For persons with medical/exposure indicators
 Catch-up on childhood vaccinations