

Your Health: Vaccinations



Why are vaccinations important?

Vaccinations help protect you from diseases by teaching your body to recognize an illness.

When you get a vaccination, it alerts your body's defenses, or immune system. Then, if you are exposed to the disease, your body is ready to fight it.

- Vaccinations do not always prevent a disease. But if you catch something you have had a shot for, you may not get as sick.
- Some vaccinations are given only once. Others are given in a few doses over time.

Keep your vaccinations up to date. This is even more important if:

- You have a health problem such as diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease, or HIV.
- You no longer have a spleen.

- You might be exposed to a disease in your work or travels.
- You live with or work with people who may get very sick if they get a disease.
- You have close contact with a baby or young child.
- You work with food.

Vaccinations for adults

The chart that follows can give you an idea of vaccinations that can help you stay healthy. It has recommendations from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The vaccines you need depends on your age, lifestyle, job, overall health, pregnancy status, and travel plans. It also depends on who you are in close contact with and what vaccines you had as a child. These may include vaccines for hepatitis or meningococcal disease. Talk with your doctor about what shots you need and when you should get them.

Record your vaccinations

- Flu
- Tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis (Td and Tdap)
- Shingles
- Pneumococcal
- Measles, mumps, rubella
- Chickenpox
- Other

Vaccination	19–49 years	50–64 years	65 years or older
Influenza (flu)	1 dose each year		
Pneumococcal	1 or 2 doses if you have certain risk factors		1 dose
Tetanus, diphtheria*	1 booster every 10 years		
Measles, mumps, rubella	1 or 2 doses if you have never had the infection or a vaccination	1 dose if you have certain risk factors	
Chickenpox (varicella)	2 doses if you have never had the infection or a vaccination	2 doses if you have certain risk factors	
Shingles	Not given to adults younger than 50	1 dose for adults 60 or older; 1 dose optional for adults 50 to 59	
HPV (human papillomavirus)	3 doses at ages 11 to 26 if you never had the vaccination	Not given to adults older than 26	

*A vaccine called Tdap protects against whooping cough (pertussis) along with tetanus and diphtheria. The CDC recommends that all adults get the Tdap vaccine in place of one of the combined tetanus and diphtheria (Td) boosters.