

ADULT HEALTH BULLETIN



AUGUST 2024

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC

ARE YOU UP TO DATE ON VACCINES?



August is National Immunization Awareness Month, observed each year to highlight the importance of routine vaccination for people of all ages. Vaccines provide protection against severe illness, disability, and death from 15 different infectious diseases such as influenza (flu), pneumococcal disease, herpes zoster (shingles), hepatitis A, hepatitis B, HPV-related cancers, tetanus, and pertussis (whooping cough).

Seasonal influenza (flu) is a respiratory virus that infects tens of millions of people every year in the United States. An annual flu vaccine helps prevent infection and decreases your chances of being hospitalized or dying if you do get sick. Flu vaccines also protect from flu-related pneumonia and flu-related heart attacks or stroke — complications that are especially dangerous for people with diabetes or chronic heart or lung conditions.

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Hepatitis B is a serious, potentially deadly infection of the liver caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV). There is no cure, so it is important to receive the vaccine that prevents HBV infection, as well as the chronic liver damage and cancer that hepatitis B can cause.

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is a leading cause of cervical cancer and can cause other types of cancer in both women and men. The HPV vaccine keeps you from being infected with the virus or passing it to others, protecting you and them from the immediate effects of the virus as well as from the various cancers it can trigger.

Despite the benefit of vaccines, 3 out of every 4 adults are missing one or more routinely recommended vaccines. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many people got behind on routine vaccines, because of missed or rescheduled annual well exams or routine physicals. Many children and adults who delayed vaccination during the pandemic are still behind schedule. It is crucial that everyone takes steps to get back on schedule with their routine immunizations, to be protected against disease and severe illness.

Adults may be confused about what vaccines they are supposed to get and if they are up to date. Some vaccines only require one dose, while others may require more than one, or need to be given yearly or so many years apart. There are also certain

vaccines that are recommended for people with specific jobs, and for travelers who are going to a part of the world where certain types of diseases exist.

Are you up to date on all the vaccines that you need? How can you know? Your health-care provider can tell you about recommended vaccines and which vaccines may be helpful for you. Additionally, the CDC has a helpful chart of all adult vaccines and who may need to get them, based on your age and lifestyle. You can find the chart at <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/hcp/imz/adult.html> or search “CDC vaccine schedule” on the Internet.

If you are not sure about which vaccines you have received, your doctor, employer, or local health department may have your vaccine records. There is no central database for adult vaccines, but the provider who gave you the vaccine will keep a record. There are also blood tests that can check to see which diseases your body has immunity to and which you may need a vaccine for to help build immunity.

REFERENCE:

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adults/reasons-to-vaccinate.html>

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