

# Infection Prevention and You



## You never outgrow vaccines

### Adult vaccination information from the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID)

Vaccine-preventable diseases haven't gone away. The truth is, the viruses and bacteria that cause illness and death still exist and can be passed on to people who are not protected by vaccines. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends vaccinations from birth through adulthood to provide a lifetime of protection against many diseases and infections, such as influenza, pneumococcal disease, human papillomavirus, and hepatitis A and B. Yet most adults are not vaccinated as recommended, leaving them needlessly vulnerable to illness, long-term suffering, and even death.

### Why vaccination is important

- 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, including cancer.
- The majority of Americans who die every year from vaccine-preventable diseases are adults.

### What you need to know about vaccine-preventable diseases

**Influenza**, also called the **flu**, is a contagious viral infection of the nose, throat, and lungs that can cause mild to severe illness. Its severity varies from year to year, but at its worst, kills as many as 49,000 Americans every year, more than any other vaccine-preventable disease.

- The influenza vaccine is recommended for everyone six months and older and must be given once yearly, from early fall to winter.

**Pneumococcal disease** is an infection caused by a type of bacteria called *Streptococcus pneumoniae* that can invade the lungs, bloodstream, brain, and spinal cord, resulting in a number of different illnesses, including pneumonia and meningitis.

- The pneumococcal vaccine is usually given once at age 65 or older (or in adults younger than 65 who smoke or have underlying medical conditions, like asthma). Revaccination is recommended for people with certain health conditions or those over 65 who received their first dose five years previously and before age 65.

**Human papillomavirus (HPV)** refers to a group of more than 100 viruses that are usually spread through sexual contact. The most serious long-term complication of HPV is cervical cancer, and it is also associated with other genital cancers and oral cancers. Two of the virus strains covered in the HPV vaccines cause about 70 percent of cervical cancers. Twenty million Americans are infected with HPV, with more than six million new infections occurring in the U.S. each year. Almost three out of four infections occur in females younger than 24 years of age. Two vaccines (Cervarix and Gardasil) are available to protect females against the types of HPV that cause most cervical cancers. One of these vaccines (Gardasil) also protects against most genital warts. Both vaccines are recommended for 11 and 12 year-old girls, and for females 13 through 26 years old, who did not get any or all of the three recommended doses when they were younger. These vaccines can also be given to girls beginning at age 9. One available vaccine (Gardasil) protects males against most genital warts. This vaccine is available for boys and men, 9 through 26 years of age.

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- Women 26 and younger should receive a three-dose HPV series over six months to reduce the risk of cervical cancer. The vaccine is also approved for males age 9 to 26 to reduce their likelihood of getting HPV infection and passing it to their partners.

**Shingles**, or **herpes zoster**, is a painful skin rash caused by the same virus that causes chickenpox (varicella-zoster virus). Shingles pain has been shown to negatively affect a person's ability to function as much as congestive heart failure, heart attack, type II diabetes, and/or depression. The pain of shingles can last long after the rash has disappeared.

- One dose of shingles vaccine is recommended for persons 60 and older including people who have had shingles before.

**Whooping cough**, also known as **pertussis**, is a serious infection that causes coughing spells so severe that it can be hard to breathe. The disease can even lead to cracked ribs, pneumonia, or hospitalization. Since the 1980s, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of cases of pertussis, especially among teens and babies less than five months of age. In 2010, California reported the largest outbreak in over 50 years, with 10 infant deaths in the first 10 months of the year. Mothers are the source of nearly one-third of whooping cough cases in infants.

- Adults under age 65 who have never gotten tetanus/diphtheria/pertussis (Tdap) booster should receive it for the next scheduled booster dose of Td, then continue with a dose of Td every 10 years.

**Hepatitis B** is a serious liver disease caused by the hepatitis B virus that can infect people of all ages. Up to 1.4 million people in the United States have long-term or "chronic" infection, which can lead to liver cirrhosis, liver cancer, and death. There is no specific treatment for people who have hepatitis B.

- Adults who might come in contact with the infection and those with certain underlying medical conditions should receive the vaccine. Hepatitis B is a three-dose series is given over six months. A combination hepatitis A and hepatitis B vaccine is also available. In some cases the vaccines may also be given on a four-dose schedule.

**Hepatitis A** is a contagious liver disease caused by the hepatitis A virus. The virus is spread by eating contaminated food or drinking contaminated water. It can also be spread by close person-to-person contact such as household or sexual contact with an infected person. About 15 percent of people with hepatitis A require hospitalization in the U.S. each year.

- Adults who might come in contact with the infection and those with certain underlying medical conditions should receive the vaccine. The hepatitis A vaccine is 94-100 percent effective in preventing hepatitis A. While protection begins approximately two to four weeks after the first injection, a second injection results in long-term protection.

**Tetanus**, sometimes called "**lockjaw**," is a bacterial infection affecting the nervous system. Approximately 16 percent of reported cases of tetanus are fatal.

- All adults who had the primary series of vaccines as children should get a booster dose of tetanus-containing vaccine every 10 years. Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria and acellular pertussis) vaccine, a three-in-one combination that also includes protection against pertussis (whooping cough), should be used in place of one Td (tetanus and diphtheria) booster for adults.

#### Learn more:

NFID – Adult Vaccination <http://www.adultvaccination.org/>

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