



Protection for a Lifetime



Immunization is a lifetime commitment

Most parents wouldn't think of letting their children go without immunization. Yet, these very same adults, and even the parents of these adults, suffer from infectious diseases—diseases that adult immunization can easily prevent. Some are unaware that adult vaccines exist that can give them longer, healthier lives. Some think immunization is just for kids, and others are procrastinators. But when these people's lives are damaged or cut short, far more than their families suffer. Our entire society suffers.

What is the impact on our society?

Illness is expensive. Each year we spend 10 billion dollars treating adults for illnesses—illnesses that vaccines could have prevented. The dollars are staggering, but what price can you put on a human life? What price can you put on a family's agony as they watch as a mother, a father, a husband, or a wife struggle with a debilitating disease? And what is the price when the battle is lost?

The number of adult deaths from vaccine-preventable diseases is towering—more than 30,000 each year. The real tragedy is that it doesn't have to happen. For example, every year more than half of adults at high-risk of influenza seek some type of medical treatment, but they fail to receive an influenza vaccine. What is the direct medical cost just for this negligence? Between 3 and 5 billion dollars. And that's just one disease.

Our nation proudly points to our many childhood immunization accomplishments. We have reduced the costs of health care, improved our children's lives, and we have reduced the number of preventable deaths to less than 100 a year. Just imagine the impact on our society if adults were equally protected against vaccine-preventable diseases.

Are the recommended vaccines safe?

Years of testing are required, by law, before vaccines can be licensed. And once in use, they are continually monitored for safety and efficacy. These vaccines are held to the highest standard of safety; however, no medicine is 100% safe. Even a medication as common and life-saving as penicillin can cause an adverse reaction in a small number of people. Vaccines are extremely safe, and improvements for both the vaccines and the immunization schedules are constantly being sought and implemented to make them even safer.

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Tell me more.
We invite both health care professionals and consumers to call our CDC National Immunization Information Hot Line and visit our immunization website. We provide a wealth of reliable information on immunization, vaccines, and the diseases they prevent.

CDC Immunization Hot Line—English: 800-232-2522 Español: 800-232-0233 Website—www.cdc.gov/nip/

Which vaccines should adults receive?

Influenza

Each year over 100,000 adults are hospitalized because of influenza. As many as 8% of those die, and the elderly are especially vulnerable. Anyone 50 or older, or having certain medical conditions, such as a chronic illness or immunosuppression, has a greater risk for severe complications following influenza. Influenza vaccination is readily available and must be repeated each year, in the fall, before the start of influenza season.

Pneumococcal

As many as 15,000 people die each year because of pneumococcal pneumonia and invasive pneumococcal infections. The elderly and people with certain medical conditions, such as a chronic lung disease or immunosuppression, are most susceptible to pneumococcal disease. People under 65 will need a booster shot when they reach 65 if more than 5 years have passed since the initial dose.

Tetanus, Diphtheria (Td)

Booster doses of Td are needed at 10-year intervals throughout a person's life.

Vaccines for International Travelers

Many Americans enjoy vacations abroad, and in today's business environment, employees are often required to visit remote areas of other countries. When visiting some parts of the world, these people are likely to be exposed to diseases that we almost never see in this country. Immunization is crucial for international travelers—both routine vaccines and others needed for specific geographic regions. This is especially important for the elderly, those with chronic illnesses, or immunosuppression. For more information, please visit the CDC Travelers' Health website at www.cdc.gov/travel/.

Other vaccines should also be considered

Hepatitis A

Adults need protection if they live in U.S. communities or travel to other countries with high rates of hepatitis A. This vaccine is essential for those who have chronic liver disease, are injection drug users, or are men who have sex with men.

Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is the primary sexually transmitted disease we can immunize against. This disease infects over 140,000 people in the U.S. each year and kills over 5,000. It is 100 times more contagious than the virus that causes AIDS, and there is no cure. It is known as the "silent disease" because it may infect people without making them feel sick. In fact, nearly one-third of those infected have no idea how they got the disease.

Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)

Anyone who has not had these diseases and has not been vaccinated needs to be safeguarded. This 2-dose vaccine schedule is very effective, providing protection to 98% of the people vaccinated against these three diseases.

Chicken Pox (Varicella)

Adults have a far greater risk of complications from this disease. These include swelling of the brain, pneumonia, and even death. Protection is crucial for anyone who has not had this disease and has not been vaccinated.