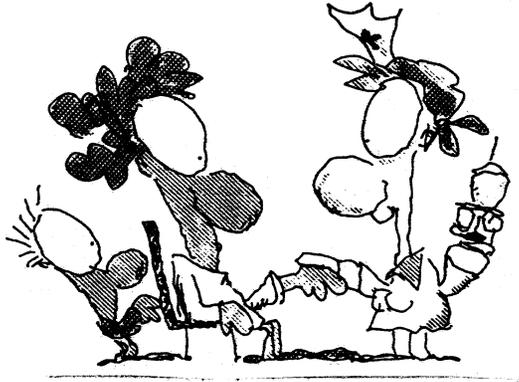


Where Are These Shots Given?

Immunizations are given to adults in most doctors' offices and public health clinics and may be given in nursing homes or walk-in medical centers. It is wise to call ahead for an appointment to receive the vaccine and to bring your shot record, so you and your family will know what you received.



What About Side Effects?

Vaccines are among our safest and most effective medicines. However, vaccines, like other medicines, can cause side effects. These are usually mild and brief, such as low fever, sore arm, or malaise after taking the shot. Very rarely, they are serious. For this reason, vaccines should be given only by doctors or other qualified people and only to those who need them.

Any adult who receives a vaccine should be informed about the benefits and risks of the vaccine before being immunized. Vaccines work best when they are given at the recommended time and on a regular schedule. Virtually all health officials agree that the benefits of vaccination are greater than the risks of possible side effects from the vaccine. If you have any further questions about the vaccines or immunization, contact your doctor or local health department.

What about Immunizations against Mumps, Polio, and Smallpox?

Mumps is still primarily a disease of young school-age children; only about fifteen percent of reported cases occur among teenagers and adults. However, everyone should know if they are protected against it. Mumps vaccine is strongly recommended for unprotected adolescents and adult males.

The risk of contracting polio is very small in the United States today due to the widespread use of polio vaccines. Some adult travelers or laboratory workers may need their immunization records checked by a doctor to make sure they are fully protected.

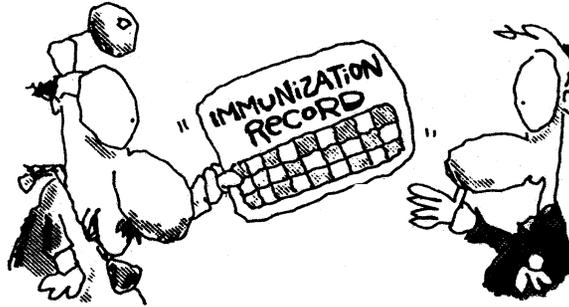
Smallpox has been wiped out as a disease worldwide, and immunizations are currently not recommended.

Who Needs A Shot Record?

A permanent personal immunization record should be kept by every adult. An immunization record card is available from your doctor or health department.

The record should be kept in a safe place and taken on each visit to a doctor or local health department. Ask the doctor or clinic to record immunizations given and mark the date when the next one is due.

This record can help you and your doctor ensure that you have the protection you need against these diseases. It can also prevent needless re-vaccination during a health emergency or when you change doctors.



Traveling Abroad

When making plans for a trip abroad, it is best to contact a doctor or local health department at least six weeks before leaving for information about any immunizations which may be needed. Generally, travel between the United States and Europe, Canada, Mexico, or the Caribbean requires no special immunizations, but it is best to check anyway. Polio, rubella, measles, tetanus-diphtheria, and hepatitis B immunizations may be recommended when traveling to countries where these diseases are widespread.

IMMUNIZATION

It's Not Just For Kids



A Guide for Adults

**Immunization Program
Colorado Department of Public Health
and Environment
4300 Cherry Creek Drive South
Denver, CO 80246-1530**

IMMUNIZATION—It's not just for kids!

Many adults think that "shots" or immunizations are just for kids, but disease has no age limits, and adults need protection, too. In fact, there are some immunizations which are more important for adults than for children. There are seven diseases against which all or many adults need to receive immunizations: influenza, pneumococcal disease, hepatitis B, tetanus, diphtheria, measles, and rubella.

Influenza The Annual Disease

Each winter, the influenza or "flu" virus infects many people. Influenza is a highly contagious disease with symptoms that include fever, chills, headaches, sore throat, dry cough, runny nose, and body aches.

Although most people recover from influenza without any complications, some develop pneumonia, the most common complication of flu. Pneumonia accounts for almost one-third of the deaths among people who have had influenza.

Flu shots are especially important for people over age 65 and people of any age who have diabetes; chronic diseases of the heart, lungs, or kidneys; chronic anemia; or diseases, such as leukemia, which interfere with the body's immune system. People in these groups are at highest risk for complications and death from influenza.

Because influenza viruses change often, it is necessary for those at risk to get a flu shot every year for protection against the virus strains that are seen that year. The best time to get a flu shot is in November, ahead of the usual flu season.

Pneumococcal Disease More Common Than You May Think

The pneumococcus bacterium can cause serious infections of the lungs (pneumonia), the bloodstream (bacteremia), and the covering of the brain (meningitis).

Pneumococcal disease can strike anyone at any time. However, the risk of catching pneumococcal disease is highest among people with chronic medical conditions and older people. Older people are two or three times more likely to get pneumococcal disease than the general population. Others at risk are people who develop pneumococcal pneumonia following influenza. The risk of dying from pneumococcal disease is higher in those who develop bacteremia and/or meningitis.

Immunization with pneumococcal vaccine is highly recommended for anyone age 65 and over, as well as for those of any age with a chronic illness. One dose of pneumococcal vaccine is all that is needed, and it can be given at the same time as the influenza shot without an increase in side effects.

Tetanus A 50-50 Chance at Life

Tetanus or lockjaw is a dangerous disease which gives unimmunized older people only a 50 percent chance of surviving it, even with the best medical care. Everyone, regardless of age, need to be vaccinated, since everyone is susceptible without it.

Tetanus occurs when soil contaminated with the tetanus bacteria gets into any break in the skin.



Tetanus is easily prevented with a Td shot – a combination vaccine that protects against both tetanus and diphtheria. People who have never received tetanus vaccine or are unsure if they have should start with the three shot series as soon as possible. The second shot

is given about two months after the first, and the third shot is given about six months to one year after the second. Many adults received tetanus immunization in childhood as the DTP or DTaP vaccine. After completing the initial three shot series, a booster shot is required only every ten years throughout life. A simple way to remember the booster is to receive it on your mid-decade birthday—ages 15, 25, 35, etc. (The Td immunization sometimes may be given after only 5 years if you receive a serious wound prior to the date of your next booster.)

Diphtheria Forgotten but Not Gone

The Td immunization for tetanus also protects against another deadly disease—diphtheria. Years ago, diphtheria deaths were part of everyday life. Today, reports of diphtheria are rare, but this disease still exists as a serious threat to the unimmunized. One out of every 10 people who get diphtheria die from it.

For adults, diphtheria is easily prevented with a Td shot—a combination vaccine that protects against both tetanus and diphtheria. Many adults received their first diphtheria immunization in childhood as the DTP or DTaP vaccine, but they still need booster doses of Td vaccine every ten years.

Measles No Longer Kids' Stuff

Measles was once thought to be a disease of young school children, but due to stronger school immunization laws, more than one-third of the remaining cases of measles occur in people 15 years of age and older. It is estimated that as many as five million young adults ages 18-29 may be susceptible to measles.

Measles is often a severe disease with frequent complications such as middle ear infection or broncho-pneumonia or more rarely, inflammation of the brain or death. The risk of death is known to be greater for infants and adults. Measles during pregnancy increases the risk of early labor and miscarriage.

Generally, people born before 1957 are considered immune to measles as a result of having had this disease. However, immunization is recommended for people born after 1956 who have not had live measles virus vaccine on or after their first birthday or a case of measles diagnosed by a doctor or a serological (blood) test as proof of immunity. The vaccine is frequently given to adults as a combination shot with rubella vaccine (MR).

Rubella Unborn Babies at Risk

Rubella or German measles is usually a mild disease in adults, but it is particularly harmful to unborn children. If a pregnant woman gets rubella during the first three months of pregnancy, her baby can have serious birth defects or even die. It is estimated that as many as 7 million women of child-bearing age are susceptible to rubella.

Women of childbearing age can know if they are protected against rubella either by receiving one immunization or by undergoing a simple blood test. A parent's or doctor's diagnosis of rubella is not acceptable as proof of immunity. CAUTION: The rubella vaccine should not be given to a pregnant woman or to a woman who plans to become pregnant within three months of having received the vaccine.

Hepatitis B The Most Serious Hepatitis

Each year, up to half a million Americans are afflicted by the three kinds of hepatitis. Hepatitis B (or serum hepatitis) is the most serious form of this disease and accounts for about half of all cases of hepatitis in the United States.

The vaccine to prevent hepatitis B is expensive but is safe and effective. It is recommended primarily for those at highest risk for hepatitis, including health care workers, homosexually active males, and intravenous drug users. The vaccine is given in three doses with the second and third doses given approximately one month and six months after the first; it is necessary to receive all three doses to be adequately protected.

