

# Adults Need Immunizations, Too!

*[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*

Watching your diet, keeping physically active and finding a good balance between work and family are all key for a healthy life. Many adults aren't aware of a simple, safe, and effective way to protect their health.

Welcome. I'm Dr. Andrew Kroger from the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases. Adult immunizations are an excellent way to prevent many diseases that can be deadly. Vaccines aren't just for kids; some of the protection you got from childhood vaccines may have worn off.

Many of you know that a tetanus booster is needed every 10 years. You may *not* know about some of the new recommendations regarding the booster schedule. In 2005, a relatively new vaccine, Tdap, became licensed for adult and teen use. Tdap protects against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis. Pertussis, or whooping cough, is a very serious disease that can be deadly for young children and babies. Since adult symptoms of pertussis are typically mild, you may have the disease and not even know it. If you come into contact with young children or babies, you could accidentally infect them. Newborns are especially vulnerable because they are too young to be vaccinated.

Reported cases of whooping cough vary from year to year and tend to peak every three to five years. Our last peak year nationally was in 2010, when more than 27,000 cases were reported. This pattern is not completely understood, but that's why it's important that everyone get vaccinated. If it weren't for vaccines, we'd see many more cases of whooping cough.

So, if you haven't been vaccinated with Tdap, get vaccinated now, especially if you're around babies—like a new grandchild, niece, or nephew.

Pneumonia, another serious illness, causes thousands of deaths and hospitalizations each year. Pneumonia bacteria can not only infect your lungs, but it can also invade your blood stream, cause meningitis, and seriously affect other organs. If you're 65 or older, get a pneumococcal vaccine, which protects against 23 strains of pneumonia bacteria. However, if you do get sick with pneumonia and you got the vaccine, your symptoms may be milder. Adults younger than 65 who have certain health issues that make it easier to get pneumonia may need a pneumococcal vaccination. Ask your health care provider if the vaccine is recommended for *you*.

Another disease that can be serious is shingles, which is also called herpes zoster. This disease is caused by the same virus that causes chickenpox. After you recover from chickenpox, the virus persists in your nerve cells. The virus can reactivate years later and cause shingles—a painful skin rash that appears as blisters. The pain from shingles can be excruciating and last for weeks or months, affecting your quality of life. About one in three Americans will develop shingles during their lifetime. It's more common in men and women over 60. If you're in this age group, ask your doctor or nurse about getting the shingles vaccine. The vaccine is licensed for people 50 years or older. But, vaccine experts only recommend it for people 60 years or older.

Influenza, “the flu,” is a contagious respiratory illness that affects the nose, throat, and lungs. Anyone, at any age, can get the flu. Symptoms range from mild to severe and it can lead to death. Certain groups are at high risk for developing flu-related complications. These include those over 65, young children, pregnant women, and people with certain health conditions, like diabetes, heart disease, or asthma.

Your single best protection against getting or spreading the flu is an annual flu vaccination. CDC recommends that everyone six months of age and older get vaccinated against the flu. Whether you get a flu shot or the nasal spray will depend on your age and general health. There are lots of places to get a flu vaccine. Check with your local health department, pharmacy, or even many stores.

Choosing to keep your vaccinations up-to-date is a simple, safe, and effective way to help protect you, your family, and your community from serious and deadly diseases.

For more information about adult immunizations, please visit [www.cdc.gov/vaccines](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines).

*[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.*