

Adult Immunization

Adults are 100 times more likely to die from vaccine-preventable diseases than kids

Immunization (also called vaccination) is a safe, effective and simple way to prevent life-threatening illnesses - not only for infants and kids, but also for adults. In fact, adults in the United States have a far greater risk of dying from a vaccine-preventable disease than kids. The good news is that immunizations can protect you. Which immunizations should you get? That depends on your age, your general health... even your lifestyle or profession can make a difference in which immunizations you need. That's why you should talk to your internist.

Your internist might recommend the following vaccinations:

Influenza (the flu)

Every year a wave of influenza sweeps the nation. For healthy adults, it can mean days in bed with a fever and severe cough. But it can be life-threatening for people age 50 or older or those with chronic health conditions. For healthy adults, one vaccination every fall prevents the virus. For high-risk adults, it prevents complications.

Pneumococcal Infections (pneumonia)

These infections of the lungs, blood-stream or brain cause 15,000 deaths each year in the United States, while a single shot protects against them. If you're over 65 and your pneumococcal vaccination was more than five years ago, ask your internist about a booster.

Tetanus-Diphtheria

Adults need a one-dose "Td" booster every 10 years to protect themselves against these life-threatening infections. Not sure if you're due? Check with your internist.

Chicken Pox (varicella)

If you were the only kid on the block who didn't get chicken pox, you should be the first in line to get immunized against it! A relatively mild illness in kids, it's usually very serious in adults.

Measles, Mumps & Rubella

If you never had these diseases as a child, nor were immunized against them, talk with your internist. They are highly contagious (can be caught just by talking with an infected person) and have serious complications for adults. One series of two shots protects you.

Immunizations only for those at risk:

Hepatitis A: Two shots 6-12 months apart

Hepatitis B: Three shots over a six-month period

Immunization against these viruses that infect the liver are recommended for people who are either at risk or in contact with people at risk. Your internist can determine if you are one of them.

A partial list of those at-risk includes health care workers, those whose sexual activity puts them at risk, intravenous drug users, international travelers, immigrants, native Americans, and Alaskan natives.

Travel Immunizations

If you are planning international travel, be sure to ask your internist if your destinations require immunizations for infectious diseases common to those areas. For more information see the [Travel Immunization](#) page.

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