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Healthy Insights

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Your Best Shot at Preventing Illness

Vaccines are an important weapon in your healthcare arsenal

From the time we are infants, doctors begin administering vaccines to help prevent serious infections, keep us healthy, and maintain the health of our communities. After childhood vaccines, do we still need to be vaccinated as adults? The answer is a resounding yes. Here's a rundown on the vaccines that are recommended for adults, and the reason why you still need to be vaccinated even in adulthood.



Vaccines are Not Just for Kids

The vaccines you received as a child did a great job of preventing illnesses that were devastating to previous generations. Diseases like polio, which infected 60,000 children, left thousands paralyzed and killed 3,000 each year, were eradicated thanks to the introduction of an effective vaccine. The last case of polio in the U.S. was recorded in 1979. Similarly, before the widespread availability of a measles vaccine in 1963, nearly all children were infected with the disease which led to 48,000 hospitalizations and 500 deaths each year.

Some vaccines begin to wane after a period of



time, requiring booster doses to make sure that we remain protected from the disease. Some infections, such as the flu, change from year to year, so that we need a vaccine every year to provide the best protection against the current strain. Also, as we age, our own immune systems may become weaker, leaving us more susceptible to certain illnesses. In these cases, vaccines can protect us by boosting our own natural immunity to infectious diseases.

Special Considerations

In addition to the general recommendations above, certain vaccines may be recommended for individuals at elevated risk due to underlying health conditions, lifestyle factors, or other concerns. Those traveling to foreign countries with high rates of diseases may need other vaccinations. Healthcare workers and those who are exposed to vaccine-preventable illnesses may have different guidelines. Speak to your doctor or other healthcare provider to determine which vaccines are recommended specifically for you.

When to Avoid the Shot

Generally speaking, anyone who has ever had a severe allergic reaction to a vaccine should avoid receiving vaccines. As always, your own

physician or healthcare provider is the most knowledgeable about your specific risks. Always consult with your doctor if you have questions about vaccination.

Here are the vaccines currently recommended for adults:

All adults	Adults 50 and over	Adults 65 and over
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seasonal flu vaccine every year• Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis) vaccine if not received as an adolescent; Td or Tdap booster every ten years• HPV (human papillomavirus vaccine) (2–3 doses; up until age 26)• COVID-19 vaccine and booster	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shingles vaccine (series of two)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPSV23)• COVID-19 Booster

For additional information or updates, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/hcp/imz/adult.html>

Sources

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IPRO Healthy Insights is authored by Dr. Clare Bradley, IPRO's Senior Vice President/Chief Medical Officer, a nationally recognized public health advocate.

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