

It's time for your flu shot

Flu season starts in September. Do you have a plan to schedule your flu shot? The flu shot should be an important part of your plan to stay healthy. Let's talk about why.

Influenza (flu) is a virus that can be spread from person to person. It affects the lungs and can cause high risk people to go to the hospital. It usually starts quickly and can last a few days or up to two weeks.

Vaccines strengthen your immune system. They contain small amounts of the germs that cause a certain illness. When your immune system comes into contact with these germs, it learns how to fight them. This is called building immunity. The germs in a vaccine cannot hurt you. Vaccines are thoroughly tested to be safe.

Talk to your doctor about the flu vaccine. People who get the vaccine are less likely to get the flu. They are also less likely to spread it to family members and others. Even if you do get sick, vaccines can help keep symptoms mild.

The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) has more information about who should get the vaccine. You and your doctor can choose what is best for you.

You should also think about getting your pneumonia, COVID-19, and RSV vaccines. People with chronic illness may be at more risk of getting sick. People who are pregnant or over 65 years old are also at higher risk. Getting very sick from infection may lead to other health problems or even hospital visits.



Are your adult vaccines up to date?

Vaccines or shots are an important part of staying healthy. As you get older you will need different shots to protect you. When you age, your immune system is also changing. So, these shots provide an extra layer of protection to keep you healthy. Some shots may need boosters to help strengthen your protection from a previous dose.

There are some shots you won't need until you reach a certain age. For others, like the flu, you should get the shot yearly. This is true no matter your age or health. Ask your doctor about what shots or boosters you may need. Live vaccines may not be safe for you if you have a chronic illness. Talk to your doctor before taking any live vaccines.

Below are some common shots you may need to get or update as an adult:

- **COVID-19**—one or more doses of the most updated vaccines.
- **Influenza (flu)**—one dose annually. Ask your doctor which kind of flu shot is right for you.
- **Tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (Tdap)**—After one dose of the Tdap vaccine, a Td or Tdap booster is needed every 10 years.
- **Pneumonia**—Three types of pneumonia vaccines are currently recommended in the U.S. (PCV15, PCV20, and PPSV23). Adults typically need one or two doses depending on risk, then one more dose at age 65. The type of shot will depend on medical history including any earlier pneumonia vaccines that may have been given at a younger age. (Those with certain medical conditions or who take drugs that weaken the immune system are at higher risk.)
- **RSV**—a one-time shot that protects against the respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). Ask your doctor if needed. (Those with weakened immune systems, heart or lung disease, 60 years and older, or pregnant may be at higher risk.)
- **Meningococcal**—Three types of meningococcal vaccines are used in the U. S. (MenACWY, Men B, and MenABCWY). Each protects against the different bacteria groups that cause most meningitis cases: A, B, C, W, X, and Y. MenABCWY is a combination shot that may be an option. Talk to your doctor about when you will need these vaccines and possible booster shots.
- **RZV**—the recombinant zoster vaccine (Shingrix®) protects against shingles. Two doses are needed at age 50 or older. Also, it may be recommended for some younger people with weakened immune systems.

- **Human papillomavirus (HPV)**—two or three doses needed, depending on your age and when you took the shot first. Important before becoming sexually active. Also important for those with long-term illnesses like HIV that weaken your immune system (three shots recommended in these cases).

You may need other shots based on certain health conditions you have. As always, your program nurse can help you keep track of the shots you need. Give your nurse a call today if you have questions.

Are your child’s vaccines up to date?

Vaccines are an important safeguard for good health. This is especially true for children. Giving a child the right vaccines on time helps to keep them protected as they grow.

Use the list below to make sure your child is up to date on their shots. Also talk to your doctor about what other shots your child might need.

Name of shot	What does it protect against?	First dose	When is the next dose?
HepB	Hepatitis B	At birth	Ask your doctor
RSV	RSV (respiratory syncytial virus) – timing of first dose will depend on mother’s RSV vaccine status	Birth – 7 months	Ask your doctor
RV	Rotavirus	2 months	Ask your doctor
DTaP	Diphtheria, tetanus, and acellular pertussis	2 months	Ask your doctor
Hib	Haemophilus influenzae type b	2 months	Ask your doctor
PCV15, PCV20	Pneumonia	2 months	Ask your doctor
IPV	Polio	2 months	Ask your doctor
Flu	Influenza	6 months	Once per year
1vCOV-mRNA	COVID-19	6 months	Ask your doctor
MMR	Measles, mumps, and rubella	12 months	Ask your doctor
Var	Chickenpox (varicella)	12 – 15 months	Ask your doctor
HepA	Hepatitis A	12 – 23 months	Ask your doctor
MenACWY / Men B	Meningococcal (2 types) – recommended for certain health conditions	Ask your doctor	Ask your doctor
HPV	Human papillomavirus	9 -12 years	Ask your doctor

RSV vaccine for mothers—a vaccine has been approved for expecting mothers 32 – 36 weeks pregnant. It can protect your child from RSV as soon as they are born.

This newsletter does not replace the advice of your doctor. Talk to your doctor before you make any change to your care. All feedback can be sent by email to editor@newsletter.com. No longer want to be sent this newsletter? Reach out to your program nurse. Or email editor@newsletter.com. ©2024 CVS Health and/or one of its affiliates. All rights reserved.

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