NAVIGATE

Steering you to a healthy, vibrant life

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Vaccine Basics

Vaccines help our immune systems protect us from serious and potentially deadly diseases.

Vaccines don't just protect you, they protect everyone around you. Even if you are young and healthy, you can still carry around serious germs.

You can pass these germs to people who have a weak immune system, such as infants and the elderly, and make them sick.

Getting vaccinated is the best way to avoid a serious, preventable illness.

How Vaccines Work

When harmful germs invade your body, they attack and multiply. This invasion is called an infection. Infections cause the diseases that make you sick.

Your immune system searches your body for infections. When an invading germ is found, your immune system sends an alarm that alerts the body to the infection. The body then attacks the germs. This process can take several days. Once your body has fought a germ, it remembers it, building immunity.

Vaccines help your immune system do its job better and faster. Vaccines let your body create immunity to germs and diseases without getting sick. This allows the immune system to immediately recognize and attack the germ if it ever invades your body.

Vaccine Safety

In 2011, an Institute of Medicine (IOM) report on eight vaccines given to children and adults found that with rare exceptions, these vaccines are very safe. For more information on vaccine safety, talk to your doctor. There is additional material available on CDC on vaccine safety at cdc.gov/vaccine safety.[1]

> "Immunization through vaccination is the safest way to protect against disease."
>
> - World Health Organization

Common Types of Vaccines

Here are some common vaccines recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) based on the ages listed below. As always, check with your doctor or pharmacist about whether these vaccines are recommended for you and inform them of any allergies, your current health conditions and your previous vaccination history.

Influenza
Influenza, also known as the flu, is a mild to severe infection that can affect the nose, throat, and lungs and can lead to serious complications. The flu virus changes slightly every year.

The best way to protect yourself and others is to get a flu shot every fall. Everyone six months and older should get a flu shot.

Tdap
The Tdap vaccine protects us against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (also called whooping cough).

Everyone 11 and older should get a Tdap vaccine and then a tetanus-diphtheria (Td) vaccine every 10 years thereafter. Pregnant women are also encouraged to get this vaccine with every pregnancy to protect their baby from whooping cough.

If you're not sure if you've ever received a Tdap, it can be given at any time, regardless of when you had a Td booster.

Herpes Zoster
Herpes Zoster, also known as shingles, is a virus that causes a very painful rash and blisters on the skin of the face or body. It can have lasting complications like nerve pain and even blindness

Almost 1 in 3 people will get shingles in their lifetime. With older age comes higher risk of complications.

A new vaccine called Shingrix is recommended for everyone 50 and older. If you previously received a Zostavax vaccine, you should still get the Shingrix vaccine.

Pneumococcal
Pneumococcal disease is caused by a type of bacteria. It can lead to serious infections, including:

• *Pneumonia,* a lung infection
• *Meningitis,* an infection in the lining of the brain and spinal cord
• *Bacteremia,* an infection of the blood stream

There are two types of pneumococcal vaccines. You may get one or both:

• *PCV13:* Recommended for infants, older adults, and people with certain health conditions
• *PPSV23:* Recommended for children 2 and older, older adults, people with certain health conditions, and adult smokers

Handwashing

Handwashing is like a "do-it-yourself" vaccine to help stop the spread of germs that can cause diarrhea and respiratory illnesses. Regular handwashing is one of the best ways to remove germs, avoid illness, and stop the spread of germs.

5 SIMPLE STEPS TO WASH YOUR HANDS THE RIGHT WAY:

1. **WET**
    Wet your hands with clean, running water and apply soap.

2. **RUB**
    Lather the soap by rubbing your hands together. Be sure to get the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.

3. **SCRUB**
    Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds.

4. **RINSE**
    Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.

5. **DRY**
    Dry your hands with a clean towel, or allow them to air dry.

We care about your health and well-being and our staff of registered nurse care managers, mental health professionals, and clinical pharmacists are here to help. If you have questions, please call 855-586-2568, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. MT.

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