

# What You Need to Know About COPD, Asthma, and Adult Vaccines

Each year thousands of adults in the United States get sick from diseases that could be prevented by vaccines — some people are hospitalized, and some even die. People with asthma or COPD are at higher risk for serious problems from certain vaccine-preventable diseases.

**Getting vaccinated is an important step in staying healthy.**



## Why Vaccines Are Important for You

Adults with COPD or asthma are more likely to get complications from the flu.

COPD and asthma cause your airways to swell and become blocked with mucus, which can make it hard to breathe. Certain vaccine-preventable diseases can also increase swelling of your airways and lungs. The combination of the two can lead to pneumonia and other serious respiratory illnesses.

Immunization provides the best protection against vaccine-preventable diseases.

Vaccines are one of the safest ways for you to protect your health, even if you are taking prescription medications to control your asthma or COPD.

Vaccine side effects are usually mild and go away on their own. Severe side effects are very rare.

## Getting Vaccinated

You may regularly see your COPD or asthma specialist, or your primary care provider. Either is a great place to start! If your healthcare professional does not offer the vaccines you need, ask for a referral so you can get the vaccines elsewhere.

Adults can get vaccines at doctors' offices, pharmacies, workplaces, community health clinics, health departments, and other locations. To find a place near you to get a vaccine, go to <http://vaccine.healthmap.org>.

Most health insurance plans cover recommended vaccines. Check with your insurance provider for details and for a list of vaccine providers covered by your plan. If you do not have health insurance, visit [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov) to learn more about health insurance options.

For more information on vaccines or to take an adult vaccine quiz to find out which vaccines you might need, visit [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adults](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adults).

## What vaccines do you need?

**Flu vaccine** every year to protect against seasonal flu

**Pneumococcal vaccines** to protect against serious pneumococcal diseases

**Tdap vaccine** to protect against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (whooping cough)

**Zoster vaccine** to protect against shingles if you are 50 years or older

There may be other vaccines recommended for you so be sure to talk with your health-care professional about what is right for you.

# DON'T WAIT. VACCINATE!



U.S. Department of  
Health and Human Services  
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