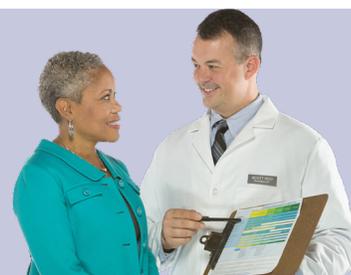


# 2

## Vaccine Recommendation

A Series on Standards for Adult Immunization Practice



Your recommendation is a critical factor in whether your patients get the vaccines they need.

Routinely assess patient immunization status and strongly recommend vaccines that patients need, whether you stock the vaccines or not.

**Recommending vaccines prompts most patients to get immunized.**

Research indicates that most adults believe that vaccines are important and are likely to get them if recommended by their healthcare professionals.

**For some patients, a clear and strong recommendation may not be enough. You can encourage these patients to make an informed decision about vaccination by sharing critical information.**

**S**

**SHARE** the tailored reasons why the recommended vaccine is right for the patient given his or her age, health status, lifestyle, occupation, or other risk factors.

**H**

**HIGHLIGHT** positive experiences with vaccines (personal or in your practice), as appropriate, to reinforce the benefits and strengthen confidence in vaccination.

**A**

**ADDRESS** patient questions and any concerns about the vaccine, including side effects, safety, and vaccine effectiveness in plain and understandable language.

**R**

**REMIND** patients that vaccines protect them and their loved ones from many common and serious diseases

**E**

**EXPLAIN** the potential costs of getting the disease, including serious health effects, time lost (such as missing work or family obligations), and financial costs.

For tips on answering common patient questions and links to patient education materials, see back.

**U.S. vaccination rates for adults are extremely low.**

For example:

- Only 20% of adults 19 years or older have received Tdap vaccination.
- Only 28% of adults 60 years or older have received zoster (shingles) vaccination.
- Only 20% of adults 19 to 64 years old, at high risk, have received pneumococcal vaccination.
- Only 44% of adults 18 years or older had received flu vaccination during the 2014–2015 flu season

Sources: NHIS 2014 (MMWR 2016; 64(4)), BRFSS 2014–2015 ([www.cdc.gov/flu/fluview](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/fluview))

For resources and tips on vaccine assessment, administration, referral, and documentation, visit:

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adultstandards](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adultstandards)

**DON'T WAIT.  
VACCINATE!**



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

# Tips for Addressing Common Questions About Adult Vaccination

## Do I really need vaccines?

- All adults need vaccines to help protect against serious diseases that could result not only in poor health, but also missed work, medical bills, and not being able to care for their families.
- You may not have gotten all of your recommended childhood vaccines. Also, the protection from some vaccines you had as a child can wear off over time and you might need a booster (tetanus and whooping cough). Some vaccines are recommended based on your age, job, lifestyle, or health conditions. For example, adults with chronic conditions like heart disease, diabetes, asthma, or COPD are at higher risk for complications from certain diseases like flu and pneumonia.
- Getting vaccinated not only lowers your chance of getting sick, but also lowers the chance that you will spread a serious disease to those around you—including those most vulnerable to severe illness (infants, older adults, and people with chronic health conditions and weakened immune systems).

For tips on addressing common questions about specific adult vaccines, visit:

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/AdultPatientEd](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/AdultPatientEd)

## How well do adult vaccines work?

- Vaccines work with the body's natural defenses to reduce the chances of getting certain diseases and suffering from their complications.
- How much protection you will get varies by vaccine and other factors like your age and health, but immunization is the best defense against many of these serious, and sometimes deadly, diseases.
- The greatest risk of vaccine-preventable diseases occurs among people who are not vaccinated.

## Are adult vaccines safe?

- Vaccines are one of the safest ways to protect your health.
- Vaccines go through years of testing before they can be licensed by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Once a vaccine is licensed, research is reviewed by medical and scientific experts to make recommendations on who should be vaccinated. Even after a vaccine is licensed, CDC and FDA continue to carefully monitor the safety of vaccines.
- It is safe to receive vaccinations while taking prescription medications. If you take medication that suppresses your immune system, you may not be able to get certain live vaccines including MMR, varicella, and shingles vaccines.

Patients vary in their level of knowledge about immunization and their preferences for learning about it.

Find free education materials for your patients:

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/AdultPatientEd](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/AdultPatientEd)

## What are possible risks from adult vaccines?

- Side effects from vaccines are usually minor, such as feeling sore where you get the shot or a slight fever, and go away within a few days.
- Some people may have allergic reactions to vaccines, but serious or long-term effects are rare.

For additional information and resources on adult immunization, visit: [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/adults](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/adults)