

# OUR BEST SHOT:

## The Importance of Vaccines for Older Adults

### VACCINES



#### QUICK GUIDE TO VACCINATION FOR ADULTS AGES 60+

Vaccines are an important step in protecting your health and the health of your family. They are one of our best defenses against many infectious diseases, and have saved millions of lives. This QUICK GUIDE outlines the symptoms and potential complications of some of the most common infectious diseases, lays out the recommended vaccines for adults ages 60 to 64 and ages 65+, and provides a tear-off vaccine tracker for your wallet to help you organize your vaccine history.

| Bacteria / Virus       | How It Spreads   | Symptoms Can Include   | Complications   |
|------------------------|--|--|---|
| <b>Influenza (Flu)</b> | Respiratory virus that spreads through droplets — from coughing, sneezing, or talking — that land on other people or objects they then touch | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fever/feeling feverish</li> <li>● Cough</li> <li>● Sore throat</li> <li>● Runny or stuffy nose</li> <li>● Muscle or body aches</li> <li>● Headaches</li> <li>● Fatigue</li> <li>● Vomiting or diarrhea (mostly in kids)</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Most recover in several days to less than 2 weeks</li> <li>● Some may develop pneumonia, bronchitis, and sinus &amp; ear infections</li> <li>● Can worsen existing diseases</li> <li>● Can lead to hospitalization and even death</li> </ul> |
| <b>Tetanus</b>         | Bacteria that enters the body through a deep flesh wound   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Spasms &amp; stiffness of jaw, neck, and stomach muscles</li> <li>● Difficulty swallowing</li> <li>● Painful body spasms</li> <li>● Fever &amp; sweating</li> <li>● Raised blood pressure</li> <li>● Rapid heart rate</li> <li>● Locking of neck &amp; jaw muscles</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Bacteria produces a powerful toxin that impairs the nervous system</li> <li>● Complications persist until toxins clear — sometimes taking several months</li> <li>● Can interfere with ability to breathe and lead to death</li> </ul>       |

| Bacteria / Virus                  | How It Spreads  | Symptoms Can Include   | Complications   |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|---|
| <b>Diphtheria</b>                 | Bacteria that spreads through droplets — from coughing, sneezing, or talking — that land on other people or objects they then touch | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Weakness</li> <li>● Sore throat</li> <li>● Fever</li> <li>● Swollen glands in neck</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Bacteria attaches to the lining of the respiratory system and produces toxins</li> <li>● Toxins destroy healthy tissue and form coating that builds up and makes it hard to breathe and swallow</li> <li>● Can cause lung infections</li> <li>● Toxins can get into blood stream and damage heart, kidneys, and nerves</li> <li>● Can cause paralysis and death</li> </ul> |
| <b>Pertussis (Whooping cough)</b> | Respiratory bacteria that spreads through droplets — from coughing, sneezing, talking, and even sharing breathing space             | <p><b>EARLY:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mild, occasional cough</li> <li>● Low-grade fever</li> <li>● Apnea (pause in breathing)</li> <li>● Runny nose</li> </ul> <p><b>AFTER 1 to 2 WEEKS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Rapid coughing fits</li> <li>● Distinct “whoop” sounding cough</li> <li>● Vomiting &amp; exhaustion after coughing fits</li> </ul> <p>Older children and adults may not have symptoms but can still spread the illness</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Bacteria attaches to the lining of upper respiratory system and produces toxins</li> <li>● Can be very serious, especially in babies</li> <li>● Weight loss</li> <li>● Passing out</li> <li>● Rib fractures</li> <li>● Convulsions</li> <li>● Apnea</li> <li>● Brain infection</li> <li>● Hospitalization and death</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Varicella (Chicken pox)</b>    | Virus that is spread by touching or breathing in particles spread from coughing or talking  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Rash that turns into fluid-filled blisters, sometimes over the entire body</li> <li>● Itching</li> <li>● Tiredness</li> <li>● Fever</li> <li>● Loss of appetite</li> <li>● Headache</li> </ul>  | <p>Can be very serious, especially in babies, adults, and people with weakened immune systems, and can lead to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Bacterial infections of skin and soft tissues</li> <li>● Pneumonia</li> <li>● Brain infection</li> <li>● Bleeding problems</li> <li>● Blood stream infections like sepsis</li> <li>● Dehydration</li> <li>● Hospitalization and death</li> </ul>       |


| Bacteria / Virus                      | How It Spreads  | Symptoms Can Include  | Complications  |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| <b>Varicella zoster</b><br>(Shingles) | Chicken pox virus that lies dormant and can be reactivated many years later as a shingles infection                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Pain, itching, or tingling before rash appears</li> <li>● Rash that commonly occurs as stripe around left or right side of body, on side of face, or near eye</li> <li>● Fever</li> <li>● Headache</li> <li>● Chills</li> <li>● Upset stomach</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Post-herpetic neuralgia (PHN) — often severe and debilitating pain where rash occurred</li> <li>● Loss of vision and blindness</li> <li>● Pneumonia</li> <li>● Hearing problems</li> <li>● Brain inflammation</li> <li>● Death</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Pneumococcus</b><br>(Pneumonia)    | Bacteria or virus that is spread by breathing in germs and is more common in people who are already sick with the cold or flu | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fever and chills</li> <li>● Cough</li> <li>● Rapid breathing or difficulty breathing</li> <li>● Chest pain</li> <li>● Confusion or low alertness in older adults</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lung infections</li> <li>● Sinus and ear infections</li> <li>● Blood stream infection</li> <li>● Infection of brain and spinal cord lining (meningitis)</li> <li>● Heart infection (pericarditis)</li> <li>● Blockage of airway to lungs</li> <li>● Lung collapse</li> <li>● Abscess in lungs</li> <li>● Hospitalization and death</li> </ul> |




**People with certain risk factors** due to health, job, or lifestyle that are not listed here, may be at risk for other infectious diseases including meningococcal (meningitis), hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and Hib (haemophilus influenza type b) vaccines. Talk to your healthcare professional to see if you need vaccines to protect against these diseases.

## RECOMMENDED IMMUNIZATIONS FOR ADULTS AGE 60–64 AND 65+

| Disease                     | Ages 60–64   | Ages 65+   |
|-----------------------------|--|--|
| Influenza (Flu)             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 dose every year</li> </ul> <p><i>For older adults there are regular and high-dose options, as well as an adjuvant option that helps increase the body's immune response</i></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 dose every year</li> </ul>  |
| Tetanus                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Td (tetanus &amp; diphtheria combined) booster every 10 years</li> <li>1 dose of Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis combined) if you haven't had one as an adult</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Td booster every 10 years</li> <li>1 dose of Tdap if you haven't had one as an adult</li> </ul>   |
| Diphtheria                  |  |  |
| Pertussis (Whooping cough)  |  |  |
| Varicella (Chicken pox)     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 or 2 doses if haven't been vaccinated yet AND haven't had a past chicken pox or shingles infection</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 or 2 doses if haven't been vaccinated yet AND haven't had a past chicken pox or shingles infection</li> </ul>   |
| Varicella zoster (Shingles) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 doses of recombinant* vaccine 2 - 6 months apart, starting at age 50, if haven't yet received this vaccine (previous infections or previous live vaccine are not relevant)</li> </ul> <p>*Newly available recombinant vaccine preferred over live vaccine</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 doses of recombinant* vaccine 2 - 6 months apart, starting at age 50, if haven't yet received this vaccine (previous infections or previous live vaccine are not relevant)</li> </ul> <p>*Newly available recombinant vaccine preferred over live vaccine</p> |
| Pneumococcal (Pneumonia)    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 dose pneumococcal conjugate for persons with risk factor</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 dose pneumococcal conjugate if haven't yet been vaccinated</li> </ul>   |
| Pneumococcal (Pneumonia)    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 or 2 dose pneumococcal polysaccharide depending on indication — for persons with risk factor</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 dose pneumococcal polysaccharide if haven't yet been vaccinated</li> </ul>  |

 **RECOMMENDED FOR YOU:** This vaccine is recommended for you unless your healthcare professional tells you that you don't need it, or that you can't safely receive it.

 **MAY BE RECOMMENDED FOR YOU:** This vaccine is recommended for you if you have certain risk factors because of your health, job, or lifestyle. Talk to your healthcare professional to find out if you need the vaccine.



**People with certain risk factors** due to health, job, or lifestyle that are not listed here, may need additional vaccines including meningococcal (meningitis), hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and Hib (haemophilus influenza type b) vaccines. Talk to your healthcare professional to see if you need these vaccines.



**If you are traveling outside of the U.S.,** you may need additional vaccines. Ask your healthcare professional about which vaccines you need at least 6 weeks before you travel.

CUT

FOLD

FOLD

CUT

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Birth date \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contact information \_\_\_\_\_

Medical information (allergies, vaccine reactions, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

## Vaccine Tracker

| Vaccine                 | Vaccine Type | Date | Next Dose Due |
|-------------------------|--------------|------|---------------|
| Tdap                    |              |      |               |
| Td booster              |              |      |               |
|                         |              |      |               |
|                         |              |      |               |
| Shingles                |              |      |               |
| Varicella (chicken pox) |              |      |               |
| Pneumonia               |              |      |               |
|                         |              |      |               |

FOLD

## Influenza Tracker

| Vaccine Type | Date | Next Dose Due |
|--------------|------|---------------|
|              |      |               |
|              |      |               |
|              |      |               |
|              |      |               |
|              |      |               |
|              |      |               |
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|              |      |               |
|              |      |               |

## Helpful Resources

Learn more about what vaccines are recommended for you, how they work, and more at [www.cdc.gov/vaccines](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines).

**Report vaccine reactions** to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) at [www.vaers.hhs.gov](http://www.vaers.hhs.gov) or by phone at 800-822-7967.

**Watch a helpful film** on vaccination in older adults and learn more at [www.agingresearch.org/vaccines](http://www.agingresearch.org/vaccines)

**Access helpful resources** on vaccination for all ages at the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases at [www.nfid.org](http://www.nfid.org)



1700 K Street, NW  
Suite 740  
Washington, DC 20006  
202.293.2856

[www.agingresearch.org](http://www.agingresearch.org)

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