



SHOTS! SHOTS! SHOTS! FOR EVERYBODY!

*Are you up to date on your vaccines?
Our handy guide will let you know.*

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WHAT WAS THE most important medical discovery of all time? Was it antibiotics, which gave doctors a way to fight deadly infections? What about medical imaging such as X-rays and CT scans, which allow doctors to look inside the human body to diagnose and treat a variety of conditions? Both of these innovations, of course, have saved many lives. But there's one that leaves them in the dust. According to the World Health Organization, vaccines have saved more human lives—154 million, including 101 million infants, in the last 50 years alone—than any other medical invention in history.

The first successful human vaccine was the smallpox vaccine, developed in 1796. Smallpox used to kill millions of people each year, and the vaccine has saved many millions of lives. We no longer need a smallpox vaccine because that disease was successfully eradicated, thanks to the vaccine. So far, smallpox is the only infectious human disease we've succeeded in making disappear completely. There are still plenty of viruses and bacteria circulating that are a threat to our health, but fortunately we have vaccines that can protect against many of them.

This fall, as you think about getting a

flu vaccine (do it!), also think about whether there are other vaccines that you should consider getting to keep yourself healthy. Many people follow the recommended vaccine schedule through childhood, but then stop keeping up with boosters and new vaccines once they're adults.

The list at right includes vaccines that are recommended for most adults (age 19 and older) by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as well as many other reputable medical organizations. You might need vaccines earlier or more often than the regular schedule if you have conditions that affect immunity (such as HIV infection) or if you take immunosuppressant drugs (after an organ transplant, cancer or illnesses such as vasculitis, for example).

Or you might need other vaccines in addition to those listed, depending on risk factors such as your age, overall health, immune status, lifestyle and even travel plans (for instance, typhoid vaccine is not typically given to people living in the United States, but for those traveling to a country where typhoid is common, the vaccine can provide protection). On the flip side, if you were born before a certain year, you likely have developed immunity to certain diseases and can skip those shots.

Take a look at the list to see if you've fallen behind on any recommended vaccines. And check with your health-care provider for specific recommendations tailored to your health needs.

WHAT VACCINES YOU NEED AND WHEN

INFLUENZA (flu)

- **Who Should Get It:** Everyone
- **How Often:** Every year

Notes: The flu vaccine changes every year as scientists try to anticipate which strains of the flu virus will be most prevalent. A special high-dose vaccine for people age 65 and older helps their immune systems respond more vigorously.

COVID-19

- **Who Should Get It:** Everyone
- **How Often:** It depends

Notes: Everyone should have the newest version of the Pfizer-BioNTech or the Moderna vaccine, which both came out in fall 2023. Some people, such as adults over age 65 and immunocompromised individuals, may need additional doses. New versions of the vaccine may be released as the virus continues to mutate. Ask your doctor or look for public health announcements to keep current.

VARICELLA (chickenpox and shingles)

- **Who Should Get It:** People born in 1980 or later, plus older individuals who have additional risk factors and were not previously vaccinated and have never had chickenpox.
- **How Often:** Once. The vaccine requires two doses given four to eight weeks apart.



TDAP (tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis)

● **Who Should Get It:** Everyone

● **How Often:** Every 10 years

Notes: If you step on a nail or get another wound and aren't sure when you had your last booster, get another one. Women should get a booster shot with each pregnancy.

MMR (measles-mumps-rubella)

● **Who Should Get It:** People born in 1957 or later who have not been fully immunized.

● **How Often:** One or two doses provide lifelong immunity. Most people are fully immunized in childhood.

HPV (human papillomavirus)

● **Who Should Get It:** Adults through age 26 (or, if not vaccinated by age 27, then before age 46 in consultation with your doctor).

● **How Often:** Two or three doses, depending on age and health factors.

Notes: Young people between ages 9 and 14 receive two doses; adults receive three.

ZOSTER (shingles)

● **Who Should Get It:** Adults age 50 and over, plus younger adults with immunocompromising conditions.

● **How Often:** Once. The vaccine (Shingrix) requires two doses given two to six months apart.

PNEUMOCOCCAL (pneumonia)

● **Who Should Get It:** Adults over age 65, plus younger people with additional risk factors, such as diabetes, lymphoma, cigarette smoking and more.

● **How Often:** One dose of PCV20 vaccine, or one dose of PCV15 vaccine followed by a dose of PPSV23. 