

# Do adults need booster shots?

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When we think of vaccinations, the image of children getting their shots at a health clinic comes to mind, but there are many reasons adults need to think about vaccinations, as well.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly 50,000 adults in the United States die each year from diseases that are preventable through vaccination. If you are planning on traveling, especially to foreign destinations, you may need to make a visit to your health-care provider for needed vaccinations.

There are regular vaccinations that you may need to update, as well. The University of Alabama's Angela Hammond reminds us that it is as important for adults to be up-to-date on vaccinations as it is for children.

Consider these CDC recommended adult vaccinations at your next health exam:

- **Tetanus:** tetanus boosters (Td/Tdap) are needed every 10 years. A Td includes tetanus and diphtheria. A Tdap which includes tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis is recommended for adults aged 10 to 64 years who have never received a Tdap in the past.
- **Human papillomavirus:** HPV is a three-dose series to prevent cervical cancer and should be considered for females aged 11 to 26 who have not received the series in the past.
- **Varicella:** The chicken pox vaccine is a two-dose series given to adults with no evidence of immunity to chicken pox.
- **Zoster:** The shingles vaccine is a one-dose vaccine that is FDA

approved for adults 50 and older. The CDC recommends receiving this vaccine after age 60 in order to maintain protection into older age when complications are more likely.

- **Measles, mumps and rubella:** The MMR vaccine boosters are important in adults who might be traveling abroad. If you were born after 1956 and received only one dose, then you should receive a booster.
- **Influenza:** Flu vaccinations are recommended yearly for adults. It is especially important for adults with chronic illnesses and health-care workers to get a flu shot.
- **Pneumococcal:** Pneumonia vaccinations are given to adults 65 years and older, as well as some younger adults with chronic diseases. A new schedule for the two-pneumonia vaccinations advises receiving the PCV13 first and the PPSV23 six to 12 months later. Discuss your personal health history and vaccine needs with your provider.
- **Hepatitis A:** A two-dose series given to adults with certain chronic illnesses and histories, as well as health-care workers.
- **Hepatitis B:** A three-dose series given to health-care workers and adults with certain other lifestyle and chronic disease risk factors.
- **Meningococcal:** One or more doses given to prevent meningitis given to [adults](#) living in close quarters, including college students and military recruits.

Other vaccines should be considered by those who may be traveling, especially for international travel. There are parts of the world with polio risks as well as many other [vaccine](#)-preventable diseases. Review the CDC traveler's website, and discuss your trip at least eight weeks in advance with your health-care provider.

Provided by University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa

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