

Vaccines are critical if you have diabetes

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(HealthDay)—If you have diabetes, you need all recommended vaccinations, the American Association of Diabetes Educators says.

Diabetes reduces the immune system's ability to fight certain infections. This raises the risk for serious complications from diseases that vaccines protect against—including flu, pneumonia, hepatitis B, tetanus and shingles.

"People with [diabetes](#) may be at higher risk of getting certain diseases and also serious problems from diseases that could've been prevented with vaccines," said Evan Sisson, an associate professor at Virginia Commonwealth University.

"Everyone should know what vaccines they need to protect themselves and discuss with their doctor whether they are up to date with the vaccines," Sisson said in an association news release.

The association offers these recommendations if you have diabetes:

- The flu shot is the best protection against seasonal flu. For someone with diabetes, health complications from flu can include increased [blood sugar levels](#), pneumonia, bronchitis, sinus infections and ear infections.
- The Tdap vaccine protects against three serious diseases caused by bacteria: tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (whooping cough). You should get the Tdap vaccine every 10 years.
- The zoster vaccine reduces the risk of developing shingles and PHN ([post herpetic neuralgia](#)), serious illnesses for unvaccinated people as they age. If you're 50 or older, you should get the zoster vaccine.
- Diabetes raises the risk for death from pneumococcal infections, which can include infections of the lungs, blood, ear, and lining of the brain and spinal cord. People with diabetes should get the [pneumococcal vaccine](#) once before the age of 65 and twice more after.

- Hepatitis B can be spread through shared [blood glucose meters](#), finger stick devices and other diabetes care equipment, so it's critical for people with diabetes to be vaccinated against hepatitis B. The vaccine is recommended for people younger than 60. People 60 or older should ask their doctor about the vaccine.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more on [diabetes and vaccinations](#).

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