



From babies to boomers - recommended vaccines

August 9 2018 11:39 AM

SPRINGFIELD – When most people hear the words vaccine or immunization, they think about childhood vaccines. And while vaccinating babies and children is critical to staying healthy, you never outgrow the need for immunizations. During National Immunization Awareness Month, learn what vaccines you, your kids, and other family members need.

“Vaccination is a shared responsibility,” said Illinois Department of Public Health Director Nirav D. Shah, M.D., J.D. “Although you may be healthy and only experience mild illnesses from a vaccine preventable disease, you could pass that disease to people around you who may become seriously ill. Babies who are too young to be vaccinated, older adults, and people with chronic conditions like heart disease and diabetes are at greater risk for severe illness or complications. If you’re not willing to get vaccinated to protect yourself, do it for the loved ones around you.”

Vaccines are thoroughly tested before licensing by the Food and Drug Administration and carefully monitored even after they are licensed to ensure that they are safe. Talk with your health care provider if you have concerns about vaccines and what vaccinations you need and when you need them.

Some diseases that once injured or killed thousands of children are no longer common in the United States – primarily due to safe and effective vaccines. Polio was once America’s most feared disease, causing death and paralysis across the country. But today, thanks to vaccination, there are no reports of polio in the United States.

Vaccines protect babies from 14 diseases by the time they reach two years of age. It is important that babies receive all doses of each vaccine and receive each vaccination on time. You can’t predict or know in advance if an unvaccinated child will get a disease,

nor can you predict or know how severe the illness will be or become. Vaccines are the safest and most cost-effective way to prevent several diseases and are required to attend school.

The need for vaccinations does not end in childhood. Vaccines are recommended throughout our lives. Adults should get flu vaccine each year and receive a Td (tetanus and diphtheria) booster vaccine or Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis) every 10 years. Tdap is also recommended for pregnant women during each pregnancy. Adults 50 years and older are recommended to receive the shingles vaccine. Adults 65 and older are also recommended to receive both pneumococcal vaccines. Some adults younger than 65 years with certain conditions are also recommended to receive one or more pneumococcal vaccinations. Adults may need other vaccines (such as hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and HPV) depending on their age, if pregnant, occupation, travel, medical conditions, vaccinations they have already received, or other considerations.

For more information about immunizations, including [vaccination schedules](#) for infants, children, teens and adults, visit <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/prevention-wellness/immunization>. Adults can also take a vaccine quiz to see what vaccines are recommended at <https://www2.cdc.gov/nip/adultimmsched/>.

Families who need help paying for childhood vaccines should ask their health care professional about the Vaccines for Children program, which provides vaccines at no cost to eligible children who do not otherwise have access to recommended childhood vaccines. For information, call (312) 746-6050 in Chicago or (217) 785-1455 for the rest of the state.