Common Questions About Adult Immunizations and Good Health

What Are Immunizations?

- Immunizations, also called vaccinations or shots, are a form of medicine made to protect you from diseases that can lead to severe illness, disability and in some cases, death
- These medicines are usually given by injections (shots)

Aren't Immunizations Just For Children?

- No. Immunizations begin at birth and continue throughout adulthood
- Proper vaccinations are preventive measures that everyone should practice throughout their life
- It is also important to remember that childhood diseases such as chickenpox, mumps and measles can be a much more serious health threat for adults
- Each year, approximately 5,000 people in the United States die of hepatitis B virus (HBV)-related liver failure. Another 1,500 die from HBV-related liver cancer. HBV infection is the most common cause of liver cancer worldwide and ranks second only to cigarettes as the world's leading cause of cancer

Who Should Be Immunized?

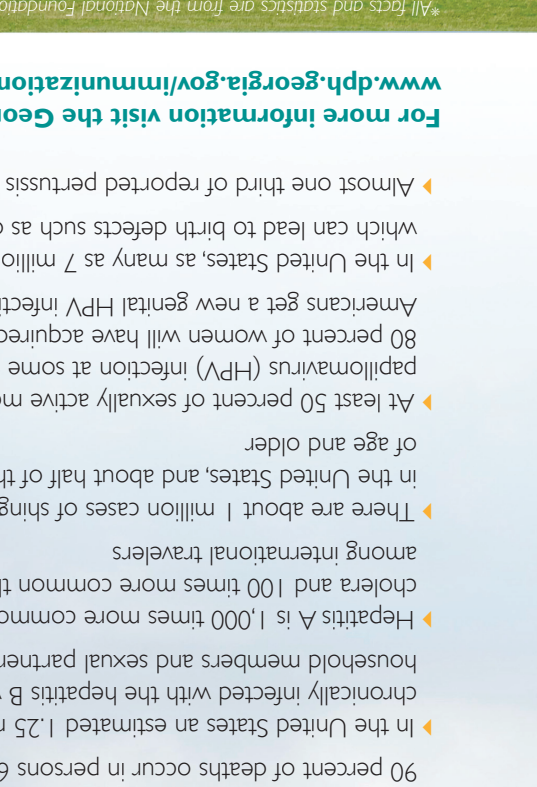
- All adults need to be protected against a variety of vaccine preventable diseases, which may include influenza, pneumococcal disease, tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis, hepatitis A and B, chickenpox, measles, mumps, polio and rubella. By getting your vaccines, you are protecting your children, grandchildren and family

Are Immunizations Safe?

- Yes, however, no vaccine is fully without risk
- The chance of getting a disease and suffering its complications is greater than the chance of problems from the vaccine itself
- It is important to remember that all vaccines are tested many times to ensure their safety

Are There Any Common Side Effects To Immunizations?

- Yes, side effects sometimes occur. They may include a slight fever, headache, redness or tenderness, and swelling at the site of vaccination for a day or two
- These side effects are mild and may not appear with each immunization
- You should discuss any health concerns you have with your doctor or healthcare provider



When Should I Be Immunized?

- You may need to be immunized with specific vaccines at different times during your life depending upon your health history, current health status and other existing risk factors
- If you were never immunized or never contracted any of the preventable childhood diseases, you are also at risk and need to be vaccinated
- Getting immunized is important throughout a person's life
- Don't leave your doctor's office without making sure that you have had all the immunizations you need

How Do I Pay For Immunizations?

- Many health insurance plans, including Medicaid and Medicare, cover the cost of immunizations
- Both the influenza and pneumococcal vaccines are covered by Medicare Part B

Where Can I Get Immunized?

- You can get immunizations from your doctor or county health department
- Call your healthcare provider to find out the time and place to get your vaccinations

Diseases Attack Millions of Adults Each Year

- Each year in the United States, on average 50,000 adults die from vaccine-preventable diseases or their complications
- Pneumonia and influenza together are the seventh leading cause of death among older adults
- An estimated 36,000 people in the United States die each year from influenza-related complications. More than 90 percent of deaths occur in persons 65 and older
- In the United States an estimated 1.25 million people are chronically infected with the hepatitis B virus and can infect household members and sexual partners
- Hepatitis A is 1,000 times more common than cholera and 100 times more common than typhoid among international travelers
- There are about 1 million cases of shingles diagnosed annually in the United States, and about half of the cases are in those 60 years of age and older
- At least 50 percent of sexually active men and women acquire human papillomavirus (HPV) infection at some point in their lives. By age 50, at least 80 percent of women will have acquired genital HPV infection. About 6.2 million Americans get a new genital HPV infection each year
- In the United States, as many as 7 million women of childbearing age are susceptible to rubella which can lead to birth defects such as deafness, cataracts, and mental retardation
- Almost one third of reported pertussis cases are in adults

For more information visit the Georgia Immunization Program Website www.dph.georgia.gov/immunization-section or call 404-657-3158

Information About Adult Immunization

Immunize Georgia

Georgia Department of Public Health

Word to The Wise: IMMUNIZE For Good Adult Health

*All facts and statistics are from the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases

Vaccinations For Adults

TYPE OF VACCINE	FOR WHOM IT IS RECOMMENDED	SCHEDULE
Influenza	▸ All persons ≥ 6 months of age with no medical contraindications	▸ One dose per year, because the flu virus changes from year to year ▸ October through November is the best time to receive a flu vaccination, but getting a flu vaccination in December, January or February can still protect you
Varicella	▸ Recommended for those who have never had chickenpox	Two doses: ▸ First dose now ▸ Second dose one month later
Tetanus, Diptheria, Pertusiss (Tdap) **Tetanus Diptheria (Td)**	▸ Unvaccinated persons 19 years and older ▸ Unvaccinated adults who have or anticipate having close contact with an infant aged <12 months should receive a single dose of Tdap to reduce the risk for transmitting pertussis ▸ Pregnant women should receive a Tdap vaccine between 27 and 36 weeks gestation (late 2nd or 3rd trimester) with each pregnancy	▸ If a person hasn't had at least three basic tetanus-diphtheria shots in their lifetime, they need to complete the three dose series which should include one dose of Tdap: - First dose now - Second dose one month later - Third dose six months after the second dose ▸ A booster dose of Td should be given every 10 years after completion of the basic series, or earlier if needed for wound management
Human Pappillomavirus (HPV)	▸ All previously unvaccinated men and women 19 through 26 years of age	Three doses: ▸ First dose now ▸ Second dose 4 weeks to 8 weeks after first dose ▸ Third dose six months after first dose and at least 12 weeks after second dose
Zoster (Shingles)	▸ Recommended for adults 60 years of age and older whether or not they report a prior episode of herpes zoster	▸ One dose
Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)	▸ Adults born in 1957 or after, if not previously vaccinated ▸ Healthcare workers, students or travelers may be required to be vaccinated, regardless of age	▸ One dose ▸ A second dose may be required in some work or school settings, or for travel. If a second dose is needed, it should be given no sooner than one month after first dose
Pneumococcal (polysaccharide)	▸ All unvaccinated adults 65 years of age and older ▸ People younger than 65 who have chronic medical conditions such as heart or lung disease, diabetes or an immune system weakened by disease or medicine* ▸ Cigarette smokers	▸ Routinely given as a one-time dose on or after age 65 ▸ Booster dose may be recommended five years later for those at highest risk* or if first dose was given prior to age 65
Meningococcal	▸ First year college students, 19-21 years, living in dormitories ▸ Travelers to certain parts of Africa and Middle East* ▸ Adults who do not have a functional spleen or have a weakened immune system*	▸ One dose ▸ Booster to age 19-21 year old college student if previous dose given at age younger than 16 years.
Hepatitis A (Hep A)	▸ Recommended for those who travel to certain areas outside the United States ▸ People with at risk conditions:* - People with clotting disorders - Illegal drug users - Men who have sex with men - People with chronic liver disease, including Hepatitis C - International adoptee family ▸ Certain laboratory workers	Two doses: ▸ First dose now ▸ Second dose 6 months to 12 months
Hepatitis B (Hep B)	▸ Adults with at risk conditions - Household contacts and sexual partners of persons chronically infected with Hepatitis B - Users of illegal drugs - Individuals with more than one sexual partner in six months - Hemodialysis patients - Healthcare workers - Certain international travelers - Diabetics	Series of three doses: ▸ First dose now ▸ Second dose one month later ▸ Third dose usually five months after the second dose
Travel Vaccines	▸ Persons who travel outside the United States may need additional vaccines	▸ Consult with your healthcare professional about recommended and/or required vaccines

*Consult your healthcare professional to determine your level of risk and need for this vaccine

Adults Need To Be Immunized Against These Diseases

Influenza is a virus that can cause high fever, chills, dry cough, headache, runny nose, sore throat, extreme fatigue, muscle and joint pain resulting in severe sickness and in some cases, even death.

Pneumococcal Disease is an infection caused by a specific type of bacteria. When the infection attacks the lungs, it results in pneumonia. The symptoms of pneumonia are high fever, cough with chest pain and mucus, shaking chills and shortness of breath.

Hepatitis B causes liver damage, cancer or even death. Hepatitis B can also pass to others even when no symptoms are exhibited. It is spread through sexual intercourse and through sharing needles used for drugs, tattoos or body piercings. It can also be passed from an infected mother to her child during childbirth.

Hepatitis A is a highly contagious viral infection of the liver and is found in the stool of infected people. Symptoms include fever, nausea, vomiting, jaundice, diarrhea, fatigue, stomach pain, dark urine and appetite loss.

Diphtheria causes a severe throat infection that prevents swallowing or breathing. It can also cause heart failure or paralysis.

Pertussis in adults can cause a cough that lasts for months. Adults can spread this disease to infants and young children. Pertussis in younger ages can be severe and result in death.

Tetanus (lockjaw) results when an open wound becomes infected with tetanus germs, causing muscles to go into spasm.

Measles causes a high fever and rash. It can cause middle ear infections, swelling of the brain and pneumonia.

Mumps causes painful swelling of the cheeks and jaws. It can also cause swelling of the brain or spinal cord membranes.

Rubella (German measles) causes swollen glands and a red rash. In a pregnant woman, it can harm the unborn baby.

Varicella (chickenpox) can cause serious health problems such as skin infections, pneumonia and in rare cases, brain swelling.

Meningococcal Disease is caused by bacteria that infects the spinal cord, brain or bloodstream.

Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is the most common sexually transmitted virus in the United States. Most HPV infections do not cause any symptoms, and go away on their own. HPV immunization is important because HPV can cause cervical cancer in women (and young girls) and genital warts in both men and women.

Herpes Zoster (shingles) is a painful skin rash, often with blisters. The rash usually appears on one side of the face or body and lasts from 2 weeks to 4 weeks. The main symptom is pain, which can be quite severe but can also cause fever, headache, chills and upset stomach.

Form 3110 (Rev. 10.13)