

# HealthyBy Choice

...One Day at a Time

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## August is National Immunization Awareness Month

### 3 Important Reasons for Adults to Get Vaccinated

**1 You may be at risk for serious diseases that are still common in the U.S.** Each year thousands of adults in the US suffer serious health problems from diseases that could be prevented by vaccines — some people are hospitalized, and some even die. Even if you were fully vaccinated as a child, the protection from some vaccines you received can wear off over time and you may also be at risk for other diseases due to your job, lifestyle, travel, or health conditions.

**2 You can protect your health and the health of those around you by getting the recommended vaccines.**  
**Vaccines reduce your chance of getting sick.**

Vaccines work with your body's natural defense to reduce the chances of getting certain diseases as well as suffering complications from these diseases.

#### Vaccines reduce your chance of spreading certain diseases.

There are many things you want to pass on to your loved ones; a vaccine preventable disease is not one of them. Infants, older adults, and people with weakened immune systems (like those undergoing cancer treatment) are especially vulnerable to vaccine preventable diseases.

**3 You can't afford to risk getting sick.** Even healthy people can get sick enough to miss work or school. If you're sick, you may not be able to take care of your family and other obligations. Being vaccinated is your best protection against many serious diseases.

#### What vaccines do you need?

All adults should get:

- Flu vaccine every year to protect against seasonal flu
- Td/Tdap to protect against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (whooping cough)

Based on your age, health conditions, vaccines you received as a child, and other factors, you may need additional vaccines such as:

- Shingles
- Meningococcal
- Chickenpox
- Hepatitis A
- Pneumococcal
- Human Papillomavirus (HPV)
- Hepatitis B
- MMR

### Getting vaccinated as an adult is easier than you think.

- Adults can get vaccines at doctors' offices, pharmacies, workplaces, community health clinics, and health departments. To find a vaccine provider near you, go to [vaccine.healthmap.org](http://vaccine.healthmap.org).
- Most health insurance plans cover the cost of recommended vaccines. Check with your insurance provider for details and for a list of vaccine providers. Since 2010, all private health plans are required to cover all immunizations recommended on the Immunization Schedule for adults. As long as you receive your vaccines from an in-network provider you should not be asked for a copay. If you do not have health insurance, visit [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov) to learn more about health coverage options.

### Vaccines are safe.

- **Vaccines are tested and monitored.** Vaccines are tested before being licensed by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and FDA continue to monitor vaccines after they are licensed.
- **Vaccine side effects are usually mild and temporary.** The most common side effects include soreness, redness, or swelling at the injection site. Severe side effects are very rare.
- **Vaccines are one of the safest ways to protect your health.** Most people, even those with health conditions or taking prescription drugs, should be vaccinated. However, if you are pregnant or have a weakened immune system, talk with your healthcare professional before being vaccinated, as some vaccines may not be recommended for you.



Don't Wait...Vaccinate!



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## August Is Children's Eye Health and Safety Month!

It's almost back-to-school time and you're prepared with your child's enrollment forms, orientation schedules, and immunizations — but what about their eyes? Since August is Children's Eye Health and Safety Month, it is a great signal for you to get your child's eyes checked before school starts.

Most children have healthy eyes. But there are conditions that can threaten good vision. Because you can't always "look" into your child's eyes to tell if they have eye health problems, set up some time today for an eye exam:

- Your child's eyes should be examined during regular pediatric appointments and vision testing should be conducted around age three.
- Parents should be aware of signs that may indicate their child has vision problems, including:
  - Wandering or crossed eyes
  - A family history of childhood vision problems
  - Disinterest in reading or viewing distant objects
  - Squinting or turning the head in an unusual manner while watching television

Talk to your child's pediatrician if you suspect your child has any of the eye diseases below:

- Amblyopia (lazy eye)
- Strabismus (crossed eyes)
- Ptosis (drooping of the eyelid)
- Color deficiency (color blindness)
- Refractive errors (nearsightedness, farsightedness and astigmatism)



### Let's Talk Eye Safety:

Use this month to discuss the importance of eye safety with your children. More than 12 million children suffer from vision impairment, and eye injuries are one of the leading causes of vision loss in children. There are an estimated 42,000 sports-related eye injuries each year and the majority of them happen to children.

Children should:

- Wear protective eyewear while participating in sports or recreational activities
- Play with age-appropriate toys. Avoid toys with sharp or protruding parts

One of the best ways to ensure your child keeps his/her good vision throughout life is to set a good health example.



*Keep the Eyes Happy & Healthy!*

