

AAP News Parent Plus

INFORMATION FROM YOUR PEDIATRICIAN

Three reasons why parents need immunizations, too

You do your best to be a good role model for your children. So when it comes to preventing diseases, roll up your sleeve and show them that adults need shots, too.

Influenza may be circulating in your community now. It's a good time to schedule a visit with your doctor for a flu shot. While there, make sure you're up-to-date on all recommended vaccines.

Routine vaccines are available for adults to protect against influenza, tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis, shingles, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, pneumococcal diseases (meningitis, sepsis, arthritis and pneumonia) and some cancers.

Many of these diseases spread easily in the community. For example, hepatitis A has caused outbreaks among restaurant patrons in several states. Chickenpox survivors are at risk of developing painful shingles later in life. Cut yourself on a garden tool or with a rusty nail? Better make sure you've had a tetanus shot within the past 10 years.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) urges adults to make sure they have received all recommended immunizations. Here are three important reasons why you should immunize yourself to help your child.



1. **You or a family member is pregnant or has a new baby.** Newborns and young infants have not received all of the recommended childhood vaccines, putting them at risk of catching these diseases from other household members. The AAP advises all eligible household members to get immunized against pertussis, also known as whooping cough. Infants are more susceptible to its complications. A combination vaccine is available to protect pregnant women and other adults against pertussis, tetanus and diphtheria.
2. **Your child has a chronic disease or weakened immune system.** Protecting yourself also provides “herd immunity” to protect groups of people who have weak immune systems or chronic health conditions like asthma or heart and lung conditions.
3. **You travel on airplanes in the U.S. and internationally.** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advises scheduling health visits to receive immunizations at least four to six weeks prior to traveling overseas. In 2015, international travel caused the spread of measles to the U.S. Check <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list> before you travel.

Find the adult immunization schedule at <http://1.usa.gov/1fRAKYw>.

— Trisha Koriath

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