

There are many things we want to pass on to our loved ones – illness is not one of them

You want to pass on certain things like family traditions, a grandmother's quilt or dad's love of books – but no one wants to pass on a serious illness. Take charge of your health and help protect those around you by asking about vaccines at your next doctor's visit.

Vaccinating our children is commonplace in the United States. But few adults know they need vaccines, and even fewer are fully vaccinated.

In 2013, only 24 percent of adults ages 60 and older had received a shingles vaccine and only 17 percent of adults older than 19 had received a Tdap vaccine.

Are you one of the millions of adults not aware of the vaccines you need?

Each year, tens of thousands of adults needlessly suffer, are hospitalized, and even die as a result of diseases that could be prevented by vaccines. However, a recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) survey showed that most U.S. adults are not even aware that they need vaccines throughout their lives to protect against diseases like pertussis, hepatitis, shingles and pneumococcal disease.

Not only can vaccine-preventable diseases make you very sick, but if you get sick, you may risk spreading certain diseases to others. That's a risk most of us do not want to take. Infants, older adults and people with weakened immune systems (like those undergoing cancer treatment) are especially vulnerable to infectious diseases. They are also more likely to have severe illness and complications if they do get sick. You can help protect your health and the health of your loved ones by getting your recommended vaccines.

The good news is that getting vaccinated is easier than you think. Adults can get vaccines at doctors' offices, pharmacies, workplaces, health clinics and health departments. Visit vaccine.healthmap.org to help find a vaccine provider near you. Most health insurance plans cover the cost of recommended vaccines – a call to your insurance provider can give you the details.

What vaccines do you need?

All adults should get:

- * Annual flu vaccine to protect against seasonal flu
- * Td/Tdap to protect against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis

Some additional vaccines you may need (depending on your age, health conditions and other factors) include:

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

Traveling overseas? There may be additional vaccines you need depending on the location. Find out at www.cdc.gov/travel

Not sure what vaccines you may need? The CDC offers a short quiz at www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adultquiz to help you find out which vaccines you might need. You can take the results of your quiz to your provider to discuss which vaccines are right for you.

All adults should get an annual flu vaccine to protect against seasonal flu and Td/Tdap vaccine to protect against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis. You may also need other vaccines based on your age, health conditions, occupation and other factors. If you are planning to travel outside of the U.S., check on any additional vaccines you may need. Some travel-related vaccines are part of a series or are needed months prior to your travel to be most effective, so be sure to plan ahead.

For more information about adult vaccines: www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adults.