

# THE IMPORTANCE OF ADULT IMMUNIZATIONS



## Educational Manual for Community Health Workers and Health Promoters



Information in this publication is current as of the date noted. For updates, visit [doh.wa.gov/immunizations](https://doh.wa.gov/immunizations). To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 (Washington Relay) or email [doh.information@doh.wa.gov](mailto:doh.information@doh.wa.gov).

DOH 348-326 December 2025

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# THE IMPORTANCE OF ADULT IMMUNIZATIONS

This manual is meant to be printed and used as a flipbook. Pages with less text are for clients, and pages with more text are for educators. It gives community health workers and health promoters the information they need to teach individuals or groups about the importance of adult vaccines and the diseases they prevent.

We hope this information helps you promote, educate, and answer questions in your community. If you want to learn more or need additional materials about vaccines, see the resources available at the end of this manual.

Email [healtheducation@doh.wa.gov](mailto:healtheducation@doh.wa.gov) for an electronic copy of this manual.

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## HOW TO PRINT THIS FLIPBOOK:

In the print settings, choose: **Print all pages**, **1 page per sheet**, **Letter size (8.5 x 11")**, **Print on both sides (flip on the long edge)**, and **Composite RGB**. Then open **Printer Properties** and select: **2-Sided (Tablet)**, **N-Up Printing**, and **Landscape**.

# Health is the most important thing for the whole family!



**When we stay healthy,  
our whole community benefits.**

**Health is the most important thing for the whole family!**

**When we stay healthy, our whole community benefits.**



- Being healthy helps us feel better in every part of our lives. This is why it's important to stay up to date on all vaccines.
- We often think vaccines are just for kids, but they're important for adults, too! Only one in four adults are up to date on their flu, pneumococcal, Tdap, and shingles vaccines—which means a higher risk of getting sick, missing work, or even being hospitalized.

# How can you help?



**Stay up to date on all your vaccines. Remember to get a flu shot every year and keep current on your COVID-19 vaccines.**



## How can you help?

**Stay up to date on all your vaccines.**

**Remember to get a flu shot every year and keep current on your COVID-19 vaccines.**

- You can help protect your health, your family's health, and your community's health. Ask your healthcare provider which vaccines you and your family need to stay healthy.
- Staying up to date on vaccines as an adult is important. Some childhood vaccines lose their protection over time, so you may need booster shots. You may also be at risk for other diseases because of your age, job, lifestyle, travel, or health conditions.
- Vaccines lower your risk of serious illness and death, and help you avoid missing work or school.

# What is a vaccine?



**A vaccine is a medicine that helps your body learn how to protect itself against one or more diseases.**



## What is a vaccine?

**A vaccine is a medicine that helps your body learn how to protect itself against one or more diseases.**

- A vaccine is a medicine that helps your body make antibodies against certain diseases. These antibodies help your immune system recognize and fight harmful viruses or bacteria, keeping you protected.
- Vaccines prepare your body to fight a disease before you are exposed to it, which helps prevent you from getting sick.
- Sometimes we need more than one dose of a vaccine. These repeat doses help our immune system get better prepared to fight disease.

# Why are vaccines important?



**Thanks to vaccines, fewer people suffer from serious infectious diseases.**

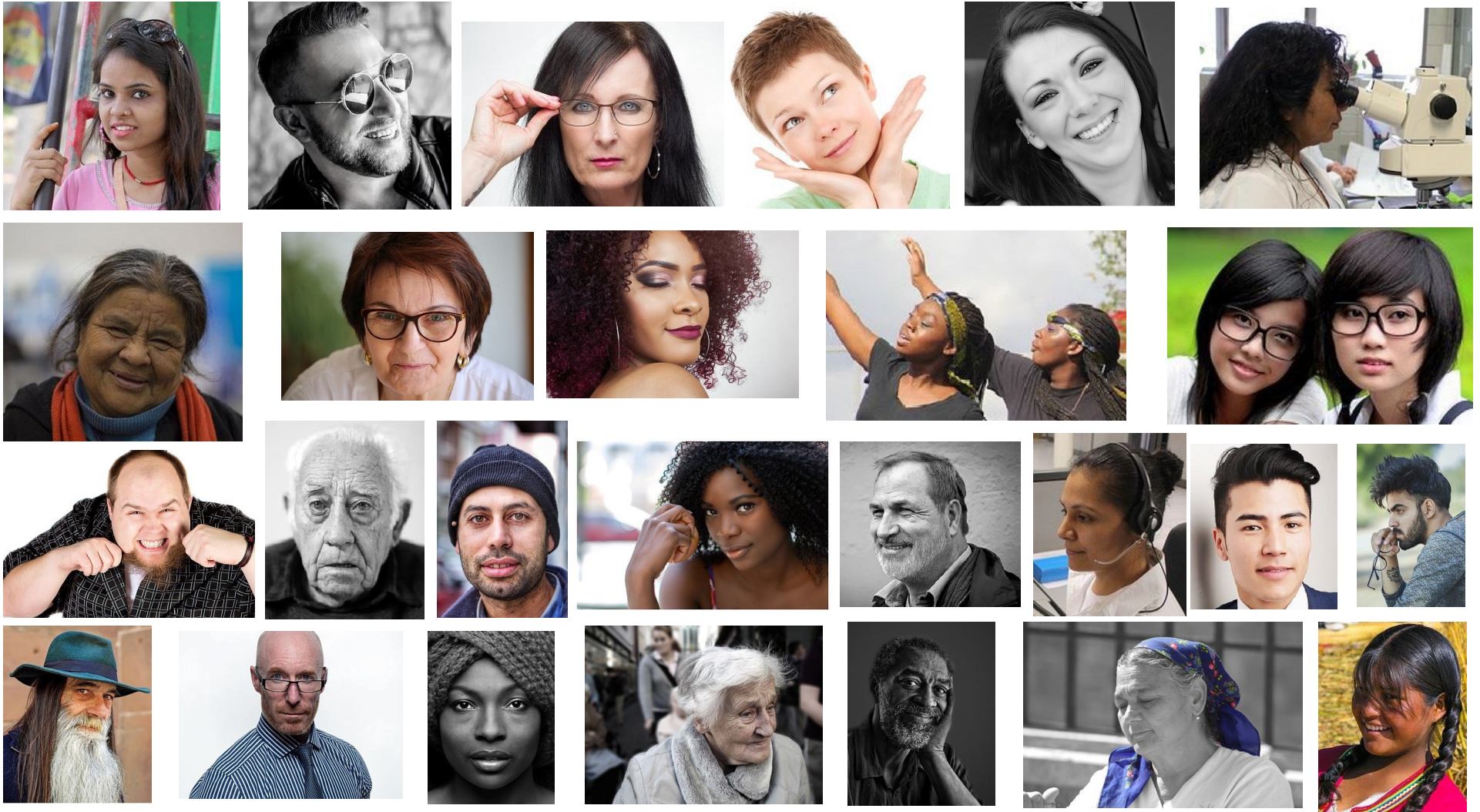


## Why are vaccines important?

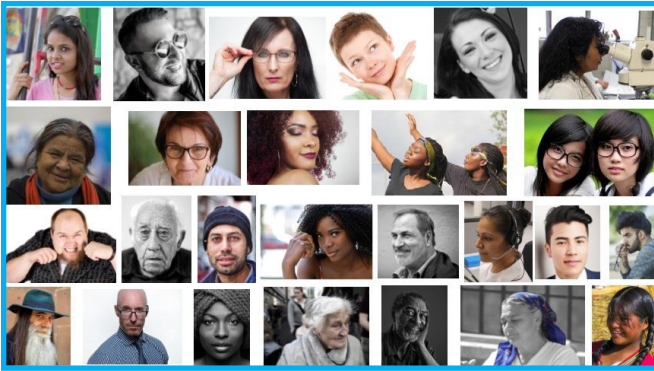
**Thanks to vaccines, fewer people suffer from serious infectious diseases.**

- Thanks to vaccines, diseases such as polio, diphtheria, and smallpox **are no longer seen** in the United States.
- Before vaccines, many children and adults became seriously ill every year from diseases, and common ones like polio could spread through communities, leaving people with lifelong weakness or paralysis.
- **Other diseases have decreased by 99 percent.** Before 1963, more than half a million cases of measles were reported and more than 500 people died every year.

# Immunity in our community



**The health of every family and community is priceless.  
Vaccines are important for keeping us healthy.**

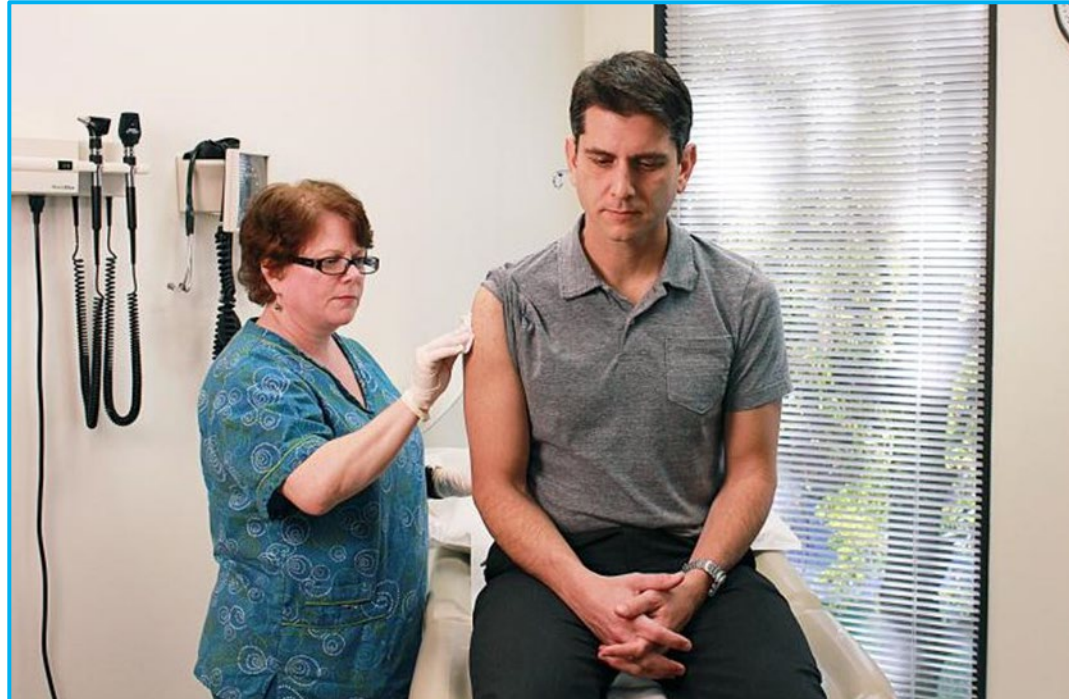


## Immunity in our community.

**The health of every family and community is priceless. Vaccines are important for keeping us healthy.**

- Vaccines are one of the greatest medical achievements because they prevent many serious diseases. To keep this protection strong and stop diseases from spreading to others, the majority of people in a community need to be vaccinated. This is called Herd Immunity or Community Immunity.
- When you and your family get vaccinated, you help protect your community by stopping sickness from spreading.

# What can happen if we don't get immunized?



**We can get sick and spread the infection to others who are more vulnerable. This includes people with weak immune systems or those who cannot be vaccinated.**



## What can happen if we don't get immunized?

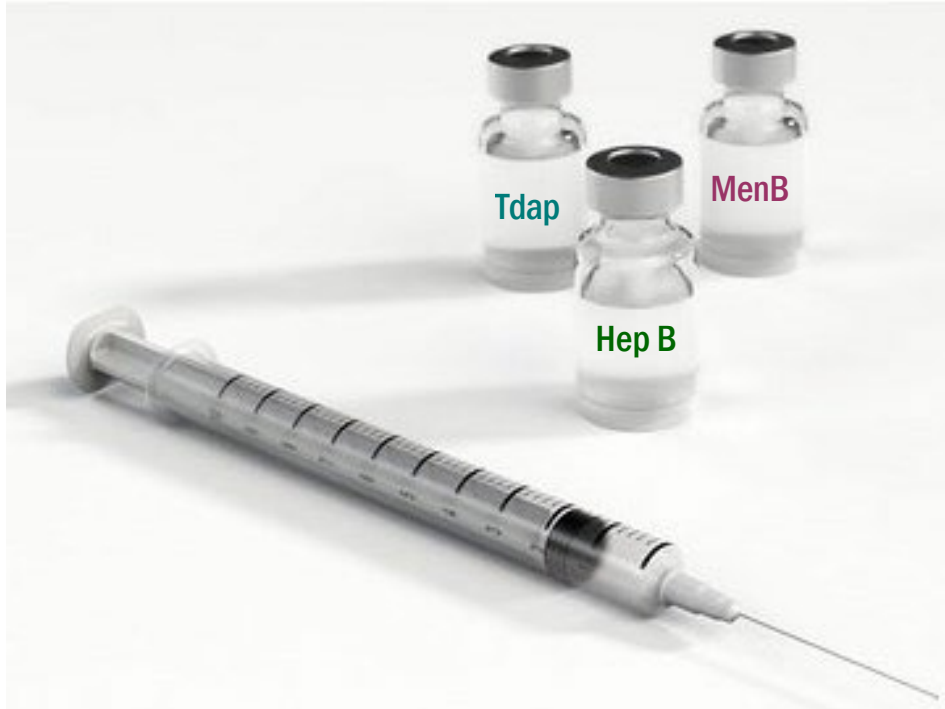
**We can get sick and spread the infection to others who are more vulnerable. This includes people with weak immune systems or those who cannot be vaccinated.**

If we do not get immunized and have contact with germs, we can:

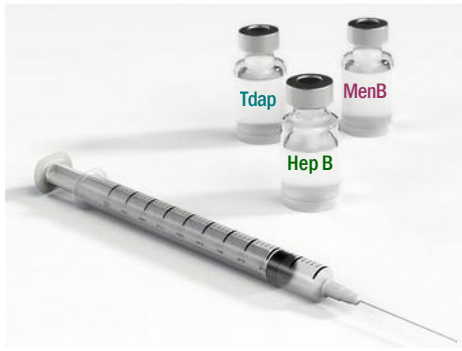
- Get sick and make other people sick.
- Put people's health at high risk, such as babies, older adults, and those who cannot get vaccines or have weak immune systems.

When we get immunized, we protect our health and the health of those around us, since some diseases can cause serious illness and even death.

# The advantages of vaccines



**Vaccines are safe and effective against many infectious diseases.**



## The advantages of vaccines.

**Vaccines are safe and effective against many infectious diseases.**

- Vaccines are safe. Medical experts carefully review vaccine safety data before recommending vaccines and continue to monitor safety after approval.
- People who stay up to date on their vaccines have stronger protection and are less likely to get seriously ill from the diseases the vaccines prevent.
- If most of the population is vaccinated, the spread of many diseases decreases.
- The medical system hasn't always treated everyone equally, and it's okay to have questions or concerns about vaccines. Talk with a healthcare provider you trust.

# Diseases and their vaccines

**We can protect ourselves and our families from more than 16 serious diseases in childhood and adolescence through routine vaccinations, along with additional vaccines that help keep us protected as adults.**

**For more information, visit  
<https://vaccinateyourfamily.org/vaccines-diseases/>.**

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# — Appendix —

# Adult Immunization Schedule

**Table 1**

**Recommended Adult Immunization Schedule by Age Group, United States, 2025**

Vaccine	19–26 years	27–49 years	50–64 years	≥65 years
COVID-19	1 or more doses of updated 2025-2026 vaccine See Notes			2 or more doses of 2025-2026 vaccine See Notes
Influenza inactivated (IIV3, cIIV3) Influenza recombinant (RIV3)	1 dose annually			1 dose annually (HD-IIV3, RIV3 or aIIV3 preferred)
Influenza inactivated (aIIV3; HD-IIV3)	Solid organ transplant See Notes			
Influenza live, attenuated (LAIV3)				
Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)	Seasonal administration during pregnancy. See Notes.		50 through 74 (See notes.)	>75 years
Tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis (Tdap or Td)	1 dose Tdap each pregnancy; 1 dose Td/Tdap for wound management (See Notes)			
	1 dose Tdap, then Td or Tdap booster every 10 years			
Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)	1 or 2 doses depending on indication (if born in 1957 or later)			For healthcare personnel, See Notes
Varicella (VAR)	2 doses (if born in 1980 or later)		2 doses	
Zoster recombinant (RZV)	2 doses for immunocompromising conditions (See Notes)		2 doses	
Human papillomavirus (HPV)	2 or 3 doses depending on age at initial vaccination or condition	27 through 45 years		
Pneumococcal (PCV15, PCV20, PPSV23)			See Notes	See Notes See Notes
Hepatitis A (HepA)	2, 3, or 4 doses depending on vaccine			
Hepatitis B (HepB)	2, 3 or 4 doses depending on vaccine or condition (19 through 59)			
Meningococcal A, C, W, Y (MenACWY)	1 or 2 doses depending on indication, see notes for booster recommendations			
Meningococcal B (MenB)	19 through 23 years	2 or 3 doses depending on vaccine and indication, see notes for booster recommendations		
<i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> type b (Hib)	1 or 3 doses depending on indication			
Mpox	2 doses			
Inactivated poliovirus (IPV)	Complete 3-dose series if incompletely vaccinated. Self-report of previous doses acceptable See Notes			

Recommended vaccination for adults who meet age requirement, lack documentation of vaccination or lack evidence of past infection

Recommended vaccination for adults with an additional risk factor or another indication

Recommended vaccination based on shared clinical decision-making

No recommendation Not applicable

Learn more at [www.aafp.org](http://www.aafp.org)

# Adult Immunization Resources

Check out these online resources to find out more about adult immunizations.

Organization Name	Web Address
American Academy of Family Physicians	<a href="http://www.aafp.org">www.aafp.org</a>
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	<a href="http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines-adults/">www.cdc.gov/vaccines-adults/</a>
Health and Human Services	<a href="http://www.hhs.gov/immunization/who-and-when/adults">www.hhs.gov/immunization/who-and-when/adults</a>
Immunize.org	<a href="http://www.immunize.org/clinical/topic/adult-vaccination">www.immunize.org/clinical/topic/adult-vaccination</a>
Immunization Action Coalition of Washington	<a href="http://www.immunitycommunity.org">www.immunitycommunity.org</a>
National Foundation for Infectious Diseases	<a href="http://www.nfid.org/immunization">www.nfid.org/immunization</a>
Vaccine Education Center	<a href="http://www.chop.edu/vaccine-education-center/vaccine-details">www.chop.edu/vaccine-education-center/vaccine-details</a>
Vaccinate Your Family	<a href="http://www.vaccinateyourfamily.org/vaccines-diseases">www.vaccinateyourfamily.org/vaccines-diseases</a>
Washington State Department of Health	<a href="http://www.doh.wa.gov/you-and-your-family/immunization/adults-age-19-and-older">www.doh.wa.gov/you-and-your-family/immunization/adults-age-19-and-older</a> <a href="http://www.doh.wa.gov/plain-talk-about-imms">www.doh.wa.gov/plain-talk-about-imms</a>

**This document was originally co-created and designed in 2012 by:**

- Washington Association for Community Health
- Washington State Department of Health

**In collaboration with:**

Health promoters/community health workers

- Sea Mar Community Health Center of Skagit County
- Family Health Centers of Okanogan County

This Fourth edition has been updated based on feedback from both English and Spanish speaking Community Health Workers around Washington State in 2025.