



Since their introduction, vaccines have minimized the risk of numerous infectious diseases. Today, immunizations prevent millions of deaths each year, making staying up to date important for good health.

Not just for kids

Because newborns and young children haven't been exposed to many germs and viruses yet, they tend to need more vaccinations early in life. But, adults need to stay on schedule with their shots, too. In fact, you may need a booster shot right now.

We all need to take responsibility for keeping up with our shots, so consult with your health care provider to find out if you need any vaccinations this year—beyond your yearly flu shot.

Three reasons to vaccinate:

1) Save yourself from serious diseases.

Most vaccinations introduce inactive parts of germs (viruses or bacteria) to your immune system so that it can help your body recognize these invaders later and more easily overpower these threats—should you be exposed to them again.

2) Shield your loved ones. When you get vaccinated, you're not only protecting yourself. Your subsequent immunity can protect your neighbors, loved ones, and coworkers, too.

3) No sick days. Vaccines can keep you healthy and help you avoid missing work or time with family and friends. Be up to date so you can spend your time the way you want—instead of sick in bed or the hospital.

Getting up to speed

Ask your health care provider when you last received the following immunizations and which first-time vaccines or boosters might be appropriate for you:

- Meningococcal (meningitis protection), booster around age 16
- MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella protection)
- Pneumococcal (pneumonia protection)
- Td (tetanus and diphtheria protection), once every 10 years
- Varicella (chickenpox protection)

If you're behind, make an appointment today to bring yourself up to date.

Do it for them

If getting vaccinated to benefit your own health isn't reason enough for you, do it for your children and others around you. Keeping up with your vaccine schedule helps keep everyone else from getting sick. So, protect others while protecting yourself.

Go to foh.hhs.gov/VAX for more detailed information about the vaccinations you may need.

Defusing Disputes

Conflict may seem inevitable, but it doesn't have to be.



First seek to understand

Conflicts are often times just simple misunderstandings. A big part of minimizing conflict involves maintaining your dignity while allowing the other person to maintain his or hers. This, of course, can take a bit of skill and a lot of patience and empathy, so that you can more fully relate to what the other person may be experiencing. This skill comes in handy when you're allowing the other person to offer his or her perspective. It's good to remember that some people have difficulty:

- Expressing their point of view
- Seeing others' perspectives
- Asserting themselves or standing up for themselves
- Communicating what they want

In short, what may seem quite simple and straightforward to you could be a rather complex experience for the other person. Imagine, for instance, that your coworker missed a project deadline. The person who missed it may have trouble communicating what's been holding up the work. Perhaps this employee struggled to say "no" to other work-related requests, so they agreed to what became an unrealistic deadline. This person may legitimately feel sorry for missing the original deadline, but have trouble explaining the extenuating circumstances.

Enhance your conflict-management skills

To be skillful at dealing with conflict:

- Slow down and have patience with the other person—and yourself
- Communicate one-on-one, in a neutral space, if possible
- Listen to everything that the other person has to say before forming a response
- Avoid jumping to conclusions
- Be empathetic—try to relate to the other person's experience
- Be aware of body language cues
- Practice self-awareness. Be open to the possibility that your perceptions might be wrong

Making space for communication

Above all, take your time and have patience. Then, make sure that you and the person you're working with are alone and that both of you have time to talk without distractions. Ideally, you want to be somewhere that feels neutral and safe for both of you.

Find a happy medium

Minimizing conflict is not avoiding conflict. Sometimes it's necessary to deal with touchy subjects with your coworkers. Approaching them calmly and skillfully can often help you get to a place of understanding.

Be a Sound Sleeper

Quality sleep habits improve your quality of life. A lack of sleep, on the other hand, inhibits productivity and increases your risk to various chronic diseases. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) called insufficient sleep a public health epidemic after finding that 35 percent of American adults sleep less than seven hours a night. In short, getting enough sleep is not a luxury, but a necessity.

Tips for a good night's sleep

- Make sure you maintain your bedtime and wakeup schedule throughout the week—even on weekends—so you get seven and a half to nine hours of sleep each night.
- Practice a low-key bedtime routine—such as listening to relaxing music and light stretching movements in a dimly-lit room. You'll begin to associate the routine with bedtime, which can help you more easily fall asleep.
- Try not to eat heavy meals or exercise within two to three hours of going to sleep.
- Keep work materials, computers, and televisions out of the room to create an ideal sleep environment.
- Avoid caffeine and other stimulants at least six to eight hours before bedtime.

Trouble Sleeping?

If you're having trouble sleeping, dim the lights and try progressive relaxation or deep-breathing exercises to calm your body and mind.

Lights out

Our biological clock follows the 24-hour cycle of the sun, so it's normal to start feeling drowsy after sundown. Stimulating bright lights from your television, laptop, or phone obstruct your body's natural sleep rhythm. That's why avoiding electronics before bed can help you fall asleep more easily.

Just Relax

A simple technique is progressively relaxing your body by starting with your toes, then your feet, your lower legs, etc., until you reach your face. As you relax each area, just imagine all the stress melting away.

Breathe easy

You can follow this with a deep-breathing exercise. Slowly take deep breaths that gradually become fuller and longer as you progress. Count how long each inhale and exhale takes, and try extending that count by one second each time while keeping your breathing relaxed and easy. You'll probably find that you've drifted off to sleep before the exercise is over.

Test Your Knowledge

1. I don't need to get vaccinated if everyone else has been vaccinated.

- True
 False

2. My children got all the vaccinations the pediatrician recommended, so now that they're teenagers, we're done until they go to college.

- True
 False

3. If you are a healthy adult, at what age should you begin getting a vaccine to protect against pneumonia (pneumococcal vaccine)?

- 50
 55
 60
 65
 70

4. Only young women need to be vaccinated against the human papillomavirus or HPV.

- True
 False

5. For which diseases might you need booster shots as an adult?

- Measles
 Tetanus
 Diphtheria
 Mumps
 All of the above

HOW DID YOU DO ON THE QUIZ?

Find the answers on the last page of this newsletter. Take the full quiz at foh.hhs.gov/VAX.

Childhood Vaccinations

Five reasons to immunize your child



As a parent, protecting your child is your number one priority. That's why you never leave your little ones unattended, baby proof your home, and always make sure they are buckled up in the car.

Doing your part to keep your kids safe from harmful viruses and diseases is imperative, as well. So, make sure they get immunized. Here are five good reasons why.

- 1. Vaccines save lives:** They have reduced or eliminated many diseases that killed or seriously disabled members of previous generations. Thanks to vaccines, your child can now be protected against more ailments than ever before.
- 2. It's safe and effective:** Doctors, scientists, and healthcare professionals conduct comprehensive reviews of all vaccines before they can be given to children. The temporary discomfort for your child during and following a vaccine injection is nothing compared to the trauma of the diseases that immunizations can prevent.
- 3. Helping your child can help other children:** In addition to keeping your own child safe, ensuring you and your family are fully immunized stops the spread of diseases to some of the more vulnerable

members of society—who may be too young to be completely vaccinated. Keep everyone out of harm's way by keeping your family up to date.

- 4. Set a good example:** More and more states are exempting parents from vaccinating their children because of personal beliefs. Choosing not to vaccinate your child is more than just a personal decision; it can put others at risk, too, which becomes a public health concern. Keep the trend toward immunization moving in the right direction by vaccinating your children and encouraging other parents to do the same.
- 5. Immunization saves you time and money:** Vaccine-preventable diseases can keep your child out of school or daycare while also amounting to costly doctor's office and hospital visits, and even time away from your job. Getting your child immunized can avert these potential issues, and doing so is often times covered through your health insurance. So, invest in the health of your children for the long run.

Vaccinations are one more way to keep your kids and everyone else around them safe. A simple shot can make a huge—potentially life-saving—difference in your child's life.