



# Adult Immunization

Communicating with patients

# Adult immunization

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- Immunizations are recommended through all stages of life, and are significant to promoting good health. Health care providers can help patients identify which vaccines they need to stay healthy.
- The following slides offered by Immunize Canada are designed to assist health care providers when communicating with their adult patients.
- The information in this resource is based on recommendations from the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) and the *Canadian Immunization Guide* (CIG).

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# What vaccines do adults need?

Vaccine	Indications
Tetanus	Every 10 years
Pertussis	Once in adulthood
Influenza	Annually for people at high risk of complications from influenza and anyone who wants protection from influenza
Pneumococcal	Everyone 65 and older, immunocompetent people less than 65 in long-term care facilities, and people with specific medical conditions
Hepatitis B	Medical, occupational or lifestyle risks and anyone who wants protection from hepatitis B
Hepatitis A	Medical, occupational or lifestyle risks and anyone who wants protection from hepatitis A
Meningococcal	Specific medical conditions and people living in communal residences, including students and military personnel
Measles, mumps, rubella	Those who have not had the vaccine or the disease
Varicella	Those who have not had the vaccine or the disease
HPV	Females and males 9-26 years (may be administered to females or males 27 years and older at ongoing risk of exposure)
Herpes zoster (shingles)	Age 60 and older (may be administered to people 50 years and older)

# Why is adult immunization important?

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Adults need to keep their immunizations (vaccinations) up to date for several reasons:

- Some vaccines do not offer lifelong protection and require booster doses. For example, adults require a tetanus booster every ten years, and should receive the influenza vaccine each year.
- Some adults did not receive all the vaccines recommended in childhood.
- People who have lived in another country as a child may not have received all the immunizations recommended in Canada.
- Vaccine-preventable diseases can occur at any time because the bacteria and viruses that cause these infections have not been eliminated.

Unimmunized adults have a much greater chance of:

- Illness when a vaccine-preventable disease is spreading in the community.

# Safety of vaccines

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- The vaccines used in Canada are highly effective and safe. Serious side effects, such as severe allergic reactions, are very rare.
- Prior to authorization for use in Canada, vaccines are extensively tested by the manufacturer, who must submit scientific and clinical evidence that demonstrates the safety, efficacy, and quality of the vaccine.
- Vaccine safety is rigorously monitored and evaluated after the vaccine is on the market. Every batch is laboratory tested for safety and quality.
- Health Canada's comprehensive vaccine safety monitoring system helps to alert public health authorities to trends in reported adverse events or any unusual adverse events not previously reported.
- Experts in vaccine safety conduct ongoing quality and safety monitoring, and investigate and respond to reports of serious adverse events following immunization. This system detects possible safety concerns associated with a vaccine so that appropriate action can be taken.

# What adults can do to manage pain during immunization

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Some adults avoid immunizations because of pain and fear, leaving them unprotected. The following methods are proven to reduce pain during immunization. Combining different methods can lead to better results.

## Pain medication

- Creams, gels, or patches are available to numb the skin where the vaccine will be injected.
- They can be purchased from a pharmacy without a prescription.
- Ask a health care provider to properly apply these products.

## Body position and activity

- Sitting upright can help you to feel more relaxed.
- If feeling faint, tensing leg muscles while sitting, or lying down, helps.

## Distraction and relaxation

- Distraction can take attention away from the pain. Consider bringing a friend, listening to music or using your smartphone.
- If you are anxious, take some deep breaths, exhaling slowly; breathe so your belly expands, not your chest.
- Ask your health care provider to instruct you to cough or hold your breath as the injection is given, to further reduce pain.

# Record-keeping and tracking immunizations

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- The immunization record authorized by your province or territory and the free ImmunizeCA app are good tools to keep track of immunizations. Visit [IMMUNIZE.CA/APP](https://immunize.ca/app) to download the ImmunizeCA app.
- Keep your immunization record in a safe place. With the ImmunizeCA app, you can back up your immunization record to a cloud service. Learn more at [IMMUNIZE.CA/APP](https://immunize.ca/app)
- Every visit with a doctor, nurse, pharmacist or local public health office is an opportunity to update your immunization record.



# Publicly-funded immunizations for adults

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- Publicly-funded immunizations for adults may vary between provinces and territories. Vaccines not part of routine vaccinations for adults may be accessed via your health care provider at cost.
- For additional information, visit [immunize.ca](http://immunize.ca) or the Public Health Agency of Canada at <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/im/index-eng.php>

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