

Vaccinations for the People You Support

A vaccination (also called an immunization) helps a person's body defend itself against disease. It makes the body's defenses (also called the immune system) stronger. A vaccination for a particular disease keeps a person from getting that disease.

How Do Immunizations Work?

Vaccinations usually include a germ (a little bit of a disease). For example, a flu vaccination has some of the flu germ in it. The vaccination has just enough of the germ that a person's body can fight it off. The next time the person is exposed to that disease, their body will remember how to keep them healthy. Some vaccinations will last for a person's whole life, but others need to be given every few years or yearly like the flu vaccine.

Which Vaccinations Should People Get for Sure?

Doctors now recommend that everyone get vaccinated for the following diseases:

- Diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis
- Measles, mumps, rubella
- Hepatitis B
- Meningitis
- Human papillomavirus (HPV; for young women and girls)
- Chickenpox (if you have not had the disease)
- Polio
- Shingles

The Flu Vaccination

Doctors also recommend that everyone 6 months of age and older should get a flu vaccination **every season**. Flu season occurs in the fall and winter but peak between December and February.

Who Should NOT Get Vaccinated with these Vaccines?

Because of age, health conditions, or other factors, some people should NOT get certain vaccines or should wait before getting them. Direct Support Professionals should **ALWAYS** consult with the individual's doctor and be able to provide the individual's medical history.

When Should People Get Vaccinations?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have a recommended [child and adolescent immunization schedule](#) and an [adult immunization schedule](#) that you can print.

More on Vaccines

- [Vaccines and Immunizations](#): The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- [Vaccine Safety](#): The Public Health Agency of Canada