

RECOMMENDED ADULT IMMUNIZATIONS

Taking preventive measures is what smart people do to live longer. Science has proven the overall benefits of these immunizations and you should give them strong consideration.

- **Hepatitis A**

Bottom Line:

- I completely recommend this vaccine. It is safe and effective and you don't want to get this infection that is 100% preventable. Get this vaccination.

- **Hepatitis B**

Bottom Line:

- If you are sexually active with various partners, it is a good idea. If your travel repeatedly to developing parts of the world, also a good idea.

- **Pneumonia shots: Pneumovax 23 and Prevnar 13**

Bottom Line For Pneumovax 23:

- Over 65 I wholeheartedly recommend this. Although not a perfect vaccine, it is better than 'nothing' against a common but often ignored health issue.

Bottom Line For Prevnar 13:

- A new pneumonia shot, but data is strong and favorable, and it's a good idea to get this shot. Not perfect, but appears to be stronger than the more traditional Pneumovax.

- **Shingles Shot (Shingrix)**

Bottom Line:

- Good idea to get this vaccine, especially if you did not get the previous version (ZOSTAVAX). After age 50 it is highly recommended. After we see the results in a few years, this immunization will end Shingles in the US.

- **Tetanus Shot: Td or Tdap**

Bottom Line:

- I recommend this get updated at the time of an injury, if it is due. Also recommend if you have small children or are a new grandparent that you get the Tdap version. I don't recommend you seek a booster if it's 'due'. Tetanus is exceedingly rare and old immunizations remains generally effective.

****Now for more detailed immunization information, I have listed....**

- **Who, What, Where, Why, and Whens'**, as well as the **Cost, Reactions, & any Negatives** for each immunization.

HEPATITIS A SHOT:

Who:

- Anybody who eats out at restaurants (sushi/raw seafood especially) or who travels to Mexico or other undeveloped countries (this is pretty much everyone)
Age range: any age, but over 75....perhaps less important

What: Two shot series:

- First shot now (works quickly...in a few weeks)
- Second shot in 6-12 months (if you forget...OK to get later than that)

Where:

- We carry the shot or you can get it at your pharmacy

Why:

- You don't want this completely preventable disease. It will make you sick for 1-2 months and you will be out of work for a few weeks at a minimum.
- You can give this to other people in your household. It is highly contagious.
- There are outbreaks in restaurants and communities. You don't want to have to 'rush' to get the immunization if you were exposed accidentally. It could be too late to prevent infection.
- People who have Hepatitis A can give it to you before they are even aware they are ill.

When:

- Any age is fine. It lasts a lifetime, so getting it when you are younger is a good thing.

Cost:

- Generally covered by insurance, and possibly Medicare Part D, \$90/each. It is not covered under Medicare Part B at this time.

Reactions:

- Very little in way of negatives. Sore arm is mild and systemic reactions are very rare.

Negatives:

- None

HEPATITIS B SHOT

Who:

- Although everyone is at risk for this infection, no matter the age, if you are older and have not had the shot, you probably don't need to get it
- Children get it as a matter of course among routine immunizations.
- If you are very sexually active, you should have this shot as the infection is transmitted through blood exposure and sexual contact.

What: Three shot series

- 1st shot now
- 2nd shot in 1 months
- 3rd shot 6 months from now

Where:

- We carry the shot or you can get it at your pharmacy.

Why:

- Hepatitis B can cause both acute and chronic liver infection. The acute infection will make you sick for 1-2 month and you will miss work for a few weeks at minimum.
- If you travel to Asia quite a bit, this is worthwhile, or to Mexico or other developing areas
- If you are sexually active and less than perfect with precautionary measures.

When:

- Any age is fine, but if you are over 50 and not having casual sexual activity, you probably don't need this
- It is suggested at the time of foreign travel, but I don't routinely recommend this unless you are travelling to developing areas and having casual sexual contact in those local countries.

Cost & Coverage:

- Generally covered by insurance: \$80.00/each

Reactions:

- Very little in way of negatives. Sore arm is mild and systemic reactions are very rare.

Negatives:

- Not everyone responds to this vaccination; in other words...you get the series of shots but still are not protected

PNEUMONIA SHOTS:

There are 2 pneumonia shots: **Pneumovax 23 and Prevnar 13.**

- Pneumovax is older but not quite as effective. It has a long track record of safety.
- Prevnar 13 is newer and more effective, but there is less experience with this to date.
- It's recommended that you get both, 1 year apart, in any order.

PNEUMOVAX 23:**Who:**

- Definitely if you are over 65 you should consider this
If you have a chronic health condition that compromises your immune system (diabetes, COPD, Congestive Heart Failure, Kidney Disease, Reduced Immunity from other diseases) you should

definitely get this.

You can get this after the age of 50 if you want.

What:

- 1 shot
- Boosters can be given in 10 years after the first shot if your immune system is very weak (this includes missing a spleen)

Where:

- Covered under Medicare Part B, so you can get the vaccine in our office or at a pharmacy

Why:

- It reduces the potential of serious bacterial pneumonia (the most common type called pneumococcal pneumonia)
- If you are a healthy person then pneumonia is in the 'top 5' of serious health threats after age 65.

Cost:

- Covered by most insurances and Medicare, \$45

Reactions:

- Sore arm is possible, but not common. No other major reactions generally.

Negatives:

- Not completely preventive. You can still get pneumonia, but this shot makes it less likely that you will be very ill from such and infection

PREVNAR 13

Who:

- Definitely if you are over 65 you should consider this
If you have a chronic health condition that compromises your immune system (diabetes, COPD, Congestive Heart Failure, Kidney Disease, Reduced Immunity from other diseases) you should definitely get this.
You can get this after the age of 50 if you want.

What:

- 1 shot
- No booster ever. One shot and done.

Where:

- Covered under Medicare Part B, so you can get the vaccine in our office or at a pharmacy

Why:

- It reduces the potential of serious bacterial pneumonia (only the most common type called pneumococcal pneumonia)

- If you are a healthy person then pneumonia is the 'top 5' of health threats after age 65.

Cost:

- \$200
- Covered by most insurances and Medicare, Part B.

Reactions:

- Sore arm is possible, but not common. No other major reactions generally.

SHINGLES SHOT: New...SHINGRIX. Old shot ZOSTAVAX...no longer recommended

Who:

- Anyone over the age of 50. Definitely important the older you get as shingles risk increases with age. There is no age limit, so even in your 80's this is a good vaccine.
- Anyone who has already had the previous shingles shot (Zostavax)
- Anyone with compromised immune system (it is a 'dead' virus and cannot cause infection like the Zostavax could)

What:

- Two shot series
- 1 shot now and the 2nd shot in 2-6 months (You can get it later if you miss the 2nd shot)

Where:

- At our office or at your pharmacy

Why:

- Shingles is reactivated chicken pox that comes from your own body. It is a painful condition that can last weeks to years.
- You have a 33% chance of having shingles in your lifetime and 50% chance of getting shingles once you are in your 80's

When:

- After the age of 50 and more importantly after 60
- Risk for shingles increases with age.

Cost:

- \$200 per shot (total \$400 dollars)
- Medicare covers under Part D, Not Medicare Part B currently.
- Private Insurance coverage is unknown and varies.

Reactions:

- 1 in 10 chance of feeling like you have the flu after you take the shot. It may make you feel tired/achy for 1-2 days ...so be prepared

Negatives:

- It is a new immunization and well-studied, but has not been used broadly in the population, so the exact nature of how people react to the shot is not certain at this time. In the studies done to date, the shot is very tolerable and without major side effects (over 10,000 people studied)

TETANUS SHOT: Td or Tdap**Who:**

- Anyone who has not had their shot in the past 10 years or who has an injury and sustains a deep cut.

What:

- Single shot to act as a booster
- Option: Td (Tetanus / diphtheria)...covers both infections. Is generally covered by insurances
- Tdap (Tetanus/diphtheria/pertussis (whooping cough).....covers all three infections. An update of the Pertussis portion of this vaccine is a good idea and prevents an illness that adults carry and children, especially babies, can get. You only need the

When:

- Boost every 10 years, but many people go longer.
- If you are more than 5 years since your last injection and were just sustained a deep cut or were bitten by an animal.

Where:

- Our office or your pharmacy/ER/Urgent Care

Why:

- Tetanus is extremely rare in the modern civilized world, but only due to massive efforts at immunization.
- Tetanus is deadly. You should try to stay up to date on this immunization, or at least reasonably close to the schedule listed above.
- When injured it is a good 'excuse' to get it updated

Cost:

- Td (Tetanus diphtheria) is covered by insurance, \$35
- Tdap (Tetanus diphtheria pertussis (whooping cough) is generally not covered by insurance, \$50

Negatives:

- You will definitely have a sore arm for a day or two from the injection. Otherwise, no major issues

Yours in good health,

Douglas M. Lakin MD