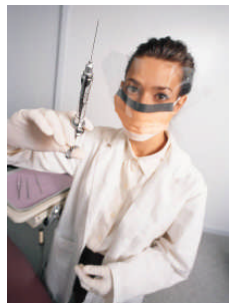


# Healthy Living Newsletter

JULY 2010

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR HEALTH

VOLUME 5, NUMBER 7



## Vaccination Awareness

- Ask your health care provider for a recommended vaccine schedule for all ages.
- Keep the date of your last tetanus booster in your wallet or purse.
- At least one month before traveling overseas, find out from your doctor or local health department which vaccinations you will need. Sometimes a series of shots are needed, so it is best to get started early.

*Source: UPS Road Map to Health*

## Vaccine-Preventable Diseases

Many diseases that once disabled and killed millions of American children are now vaccine-preventable. Thanks to our country's high childhood immunization coverage levels, these diseases are now less common:

- Diphtheria
- Haemophilus Influenzae Type b (Hib)
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Influenza
- Measles
- Meningococcal
- Mumps
- Pertussis (whooping cough)
- Pneumococcal disease
- Polio
- Rotavirus (severe diarrhea)
- Rubella (German measles)
- Tetanus (lockjaw)
- Varicella (chicken pox)

*Source: www.cdc.gov*

## Vaccinations

### Types of Vaccines

On average, your immune system takes more than a week to learn how to fight off an unfamiliar microbe. Sometimes that's not soon enough. Stronger microbes can spread through your body faster than your body can fend them off. Your body often gains the upper hand after a few weeks, but in the meantime you're sick. Certain microbes are so powerful, or virulent, they can overwhelm or escape your body's natural defenses. In those situations, vaccines can make all the difference.

Vaccines work by triggering a response by the body's immune system when administered. Vaccines stimulate the body to make antibodies – proteins that specifically recognize and target disease-causing bacteria and viruses, and help eliminate them from the body before they cause disease. Vaccines are frequently given by injection (a shot), but some are given orally and one is given via nasal spray.

There are several types of vaccines:

- **Live attenuated** – These vaccines contain a living bacteria or virus that's been weakened in the laboratory so that it doesn't cause the actual disease in individuals with healthy immune systems.
- **Inactivated (whole or subunit)** – These vaccines can be safely given to individuals with weakened immune systems. However, for such individuals, additional (booster) doses may be needed to achieve immunity.
- **Toxoids** – Some bacteria cause illness by secreting a poison or toxin. Scientists discovered that, by inactivating the toxins, which creates toxoids, and then administering the toxoid to individuals can also give protection against the disease.

### Childhood Vaccinations

Vaccinations protect children from serious diseases. Getting all of the recommended shots by age 2 will protect your child from 14 dangerous diseases, including mumps, tetanus, chicken pox, and hepatitis.

Vaccinations work best when they are given at certain ages. Doctors follow a schedule that begins at birth. Ask your doctor for a list of your child's shots and keep it in a safe place.

### Vaccination Records

Records of what vaccines were given to an individual, and when, are important. If you can't locate complete records for yourself or your child, you may be required to repeat some of the vaccines to attend school or camp, or to participate in organized sports.

So where can you look for your immunization records? Contact your doctor or public health clinic, or try calling your local or state health department's immunization program. Sometimes schools will hold the vaccination records of children who attended. College students should check with their campus's medical services for information.

*Source: www.fda.gov; www.healthfinder.gov; UPS Road Map to Health*

**Call your medical health plan carrier or log on to their Web site to find out whether you have access to a Personal Health Record (PHR). A PHR stores important information about your medical and family history, allergies, and claims—including the names and dates of vaccinations you've received.**

## Shingles at a Glance

Shingles is a localized infection due to the varicella-zoster virus (VZV), the same virus that causes chickenpox. It occurs only in people who have had chickenpox in the past and represents a reactivation of the dormant varicella virus. Why the virus reactivates in some individuals and not in others is unknown.

The disease is primarily seen in the elderly, but occasionally it occurs in younger individuals. It affects both sexes and all races with equal frequency and occurs sporadically throughout the year.

### Did You Know?

A person must have already had chickenpox in the past to develop shingles. Contact with an infected individual does not cause another person's dormant virus to reactivate. However, the virus from a shingles patient may cause chickenpox in someone who has not had it before.

*Source: UPS Road Map to Health*

## Human Papilloma Virus (HPV)

HPVs are a group of over 100 related viruses. Each HPV virus in the group is given a number, which is called an HPV type. HPVs are called papilloma viruses because some of the HPV types cause warts or papillomas, which are non-cancerous tumors.

The papilloma viruses are attracted to and can live only in squamous epithelial cells in the body. These are thin, flat cells that are found on the surface of the skin, cervix, vagina, anus, vulva, head of the penis, mouth, and throat.

At this time, there are two vaccines available to help prevent certain types of HPV and some of the cancers linked to those types.

**Gardasil and Cervarix** -These vaccines prevent 2 types of HPV (HPV 16 and 18) that cause 70 percent of all cervical cancers.

Gardasil also protects against 2 types of HPV (HPV 6 and 11) that cause 90 percent of all genital warts.

*Source: www.cancer.org*



## Childhood Maladies

Below are some examples of the maladies that children face and that can be prevented or controlled with vaccinations.

### Diphtheria

Diphtheria is an acute bacterial disease that usually affects the tonsils, throat, nose, and or skin. The disease is passed from person to person by droplet transmission, usually by breathing in diphtheria bacteria after an infected person has coughed, sneezed, or even laughed. It can also be spread by handling used tissues or by drinking from a glass used by an infected person. Diphtheria can lead to breathing problems, heart failure, paralysis, and sometimes death.

There is a vaccine for diphtheria. Most people receive their first dose as children in a form of combined vaccine called DTaP (diphtheria-tetanus-acellular pertussis). Health officials now recommend that adults and adolescents receive a booster vaccine to protect against tetanus, diphtheria, and whooping cough.

### Whooping Cough

Whooping cough, also known as pertussis, is a serious infection that spreads easily from person to person. The infection causes coughing spells so severe that victims can find it hard to breath, eat, or sleep. Whooping cough can even lead to cracked ribs, pneumonia, or hospitalization. In the past, whooping cough was kept at bay by infant and childhood immunizations. It is now know that the vaccination for whooping cough administered during childhood wears off by the teen years. Adolescents and adults are at risk of infection.

### Tetanus

Tetanus, or lockjaw, is a bacterial disease that affects the nervous system. It's contracted through a cut or wound that becomes contaminated with tetanus bacteria. The bacteria can get through deep puncture wounds or cuts like those made by nails or knives, but even a scratch provides an entryway. Tetanus bacteria are present worldwide and are commonly found in soil and on most surfaces. The infection causes severe muscle spasms, leading to "locking" of the jaw, making it hard to open the mouth or swallow. In severe cases, tetanus infections may lead to death by suffocation. Tetanus is the only vaccine-preventable disease that is not transmitted from person to person.

### Chickenpox

Chickenpox is caused by a virus called varicella-zoster. People who get the virus often develop a rash of spots that look like blisters on the body. The blisters are small and sit on an area of red skin that can be anywhere from the size of a pencil eraser to the size of a dime.

You have probably heard that chicken pox is itchy. While that's true, other symptoms include a runny nose, cough and/or fever. The good news is that chickenpox is a common illness for kids and most people get better just by resting, just as you would with a cold or the flu. Thanks to the chickenpox vaccine, many kids do not get chickenpox at all. Children who do get chickenpox even after getting the shot often get less severe cases, which means they get better more quickly.

*Source: kidshealth.org ;www.nfid.org*