



BlueCross BlueShield of Illinois

WELLNESS  CAN'T WAIT

Vaccines for Young Adults



Wellness Can't Wait

- ☒ Listen to a podcast
- ☒ Get a new cell phone
- ☐ Make sure you're up to date on vaccines

Some things should be checked first.

You're young. Healthy. Active. With years of life ahead of you. You're bulletproof, right? When you're young, it's easy to think you're immune to a lot of the stuff that can trip you up – including illness. But your **Wellness Can't Wait.**



MAYBE YOU THINK YOU DON'T NEED TO GET AN ANNUAL FLU SHOT OR THE OTHER VACCINES RECOMMENDED FOR ADULTS. YOU MIGHT HATE NEEDLES. WHATEVER THE HOLD-UP, IT'S IMPORTANT TO REALIZE A FEW SECONDS OF DISCOMFORT MAY SAFEGUARD YOUR HEALTH AND THE HEALTH OF THE PEOPLE YOU LOVE.

Vaccines not only protect your health, they protect the health of those around you (family, friends, peers, co-workers, roommates etc.). A vaccine-preventable disease might keep you in bed for a few days, but it could be deadly for young children and older adults.

We get most of our shots when we're very young. Still, there are some shots we need to get as young adults.

Which Vaccines Do I Need?

Here are the vaccines recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for **young adults age 19 to 26**.

- **Tdap vaccine.** Lockjaw, nose and throat infections, and whooping cough are no fun. A Tdap shot protects you from these serious diseases (tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis). If you haven't gotten it yet, do so ASAP. You should get a tetanus/diphtheria (Td) vaccine booster every 10 years after your Tdap shot.
- **Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine.** Once well controlled with vaccines, cases of measles and mumps are now on the rise. Outbreaks have even been reported on college campuses. To protect yourself from these very contagious and potentially serious viruses (along with rubella), get the MMR vaccine. One to two doses of MMR are usually given to young children, but if you didn't get them as a child, talk to your doctor about getting it now.
- **HPV vaccine.** If there was a shot that could prevent cancer, wouldn't you get it? Well, the HPV vaccine protects you from certain strains of the human papillomavirus (HPV), a sexually transmitted disease. HPV can lead to a long list of health issues – genital warts, as well as cancer of the cervix, vulva, vagina, penis and anus. If you didn't start the HPV vaccine series (three shots) when you were 11 or 12, you should be vaccinated before you are 27 (if you are female) and before you are 22 (if you are male). Guys between the ages of 22 and 26, who have not gotten the shots before, should talk to their doctor about getting vaccinated.
- **Seasonal flu vaccine.** While you might be able to fight off the flu within a few days, your grandparents and other people with a weakened immune system you come in contact with may not be so fortunate. The flu can lead to complications such as bronchitis, sinus infections and pneumonia – which could be life-threatening for older adults. The CDC recommends that everyone over the age of 6 months get a flu vaccine each flu season.
- **Meningococcal conjugate vaccine.** Say that three times fast! It may be wordy, but this vaccine is effective. It protects against bacterial meningitis, an infection that causes the membranes surrounding the brain and spine to swell. If you haven't gotten vaccinated, do so – especially if you're going into your freshman year at college and plan on living in close quarters like the dorms.



Call your doctor now and make an appointment, especially if you're going away to school soon. Bring this list to your appointment and talk to your doctor about what vaccines you may need.