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Adult Vaccinations

Each year between 50,000 and 70,000 adults in the U.S. die from diseases that can be prevented by vaccines. Some adults are reluctant to be vaccinated because they believe that side effects from vaccines are severe or cause the illnesses they are supposed to prevent. These claims are not backed up by scientific research. Here are some reasons why you should consider getting vaccinated.

1) Immunity may fade

Some vaccines do not give lifetime immunity. Whooping Cough (Pertussis) is on the rise in the U.S., and is an example of what can happen when a person is immunized only as a child. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends a one-time adult booster shot for Pertussis (given in combination with vaccines for tetanus and diphtheria).

2) Some adults were not completely vaccinated as children

- Recommended catch-up vaccines
 - Measles/Mumps/Rubella (MMR) a single combined shot
 - Varicella (chickenpox)

3) Some vaccines did not exist

- Two new vaccines became available in 2006
 - Herpes Zoster (Shingles). For adults age 60 and older.

- Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) the cause of cervical cancer, genital warts, and other disease. For woman 26 years old and below.
- 4) As you age, common infections are more likely to cause serious disease.
- Adults 60 and older
 - Herpes Zoster Vaccine (Shingles) This prevents a painful reactivation of chickenpox.
 - Adults (especially ages 65 and older)
 - Influenza vaccine annually given in fall and winter.
 - Pneumonia vaccine given once. Prevents some forms of pneumonia.

Medicare covers some adult vaccinations and private insurance is improving as the importance to public health of adult vaccinations becomes better understood. The best way to be sure you are up to date with the recommended vaccines is to discuss your personal situation with your physician.

For more information, please visit <http://www.safecare.com>.

Richard J. Wilbur, M.D. is Board Certified in Internal Medicine.

Office Hours:

Mondays 9:00 AM - 4:30 PM,

Tuesdays 9:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Wednesdays 9:00 AM - 7:30 PM

Thursdays 9:00 AM - 12:15 PM

Fridays 9:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Alternate Saturdays 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

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