

# Healthy Steps to Immunizations

From your friends at Blue Care Network

## Here's why you need to immunize

Immunizations help protect you or your child from disease. They also help reduce the spread of disease to others and prevent epidemics.

In many cases when you get a vaccine, you get a tiny amount of the organism that causes the disease. This amount is not enough to give you the actual disease. But it is enough to cause your immune system to make antibodies that can recognize and attack the organism if you are ever exposed to it.

The standard childhood immunization schedule includes vaccines for:

- Diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (also known as whooping cough)
- Polio
- Measles, mumps and rubella
- Chickenpox
- Rotavirus
- Hepatitis B
- Hepatitis A
- Haemophilus influenzae type b disease, or Hib disease, which can lead to serious illness in young children, including pneumonia and meningitis
- Pneumococcal disease that can cause pneumonia and meningitis, as well as other serious illnesses, in young children

### What adolescents need

- Adolescents need boosters and some vaccines. For example, they are 10 times more likely than children to develop serious complications when infected with chickenpox.
- College freshmen who will be living in a dorm have an increased risk of developing meningococcal disease.
- The HPV vaccine, which protects against the two types of HPV that cause most (70 percent) cervical cancers, is recommended for 11 to 12 year-old girls.

### Older adults

Older adults are particularly susceptible to serious diseases caused by common infections such as influenza and pneumococcus. Pneumococcal pneumonia and complications from influenza together represent the sixth leading cause of death for older adults.

## Is a flu shot for you?

Each year, at least 35 million Americans suffer from the aches and pains of the flu, which typically knocks them off their feet for at least a few days. But flu can also lead to serious illness — pneumonia and even death for those who are at risk.

The Centers for Disease Control recommends an annual flu shot for:

- People 50 or older
- Those at any age with a chronic medical condition
- Health care workers, or anyone who works with people at high risk
- All children 6 to 23 months of age, especially those with a medical condition

The ideal time to get vaccinated is between September and December. Flu season in the United States usually runs from November to March or April. Protection develops about two weeks after the shot and may last up to a year.

Ask your doctor about getting a flu shot.

*BCN recommends a pneumonia vaccine for anyone 65 or older.*

# Puzzle

## Words of Wellness Word Search

Search the grid below to find the words in the list. Look backward, forward and diagonally.

ADULTS  
CHICKEN POX  
CHILDREN  
DIPHTHERIA  
FAMILY  
FLU  
HEPATITIS  
MEASLES  
MUMPS  
PNEUMONIA  
PROTECTION  
TETANUS  
VACCINE  
WELLNESS

T	S	B	C	C	N	A	E	M	C	E	Y
S	E	L	S	H	A	E	M	S	H	A	O
S	F	T	V	I	X	R	M	S	I	H	P
E	A	N	A	C	O	A	U	E	L	E	R
N	M	T	C	K	N	C	M	L	D	P	O
L	I	D	C	E	U	U	P	S	R	A	T
L	L	I	I	N	S	I	S	A	E	T	E
E	Y	A	N	P	P	U	F	E	N	I	C
W	P	C	E	O	H	T	N	M	I	T	T
P	C	U	G	X	H	T	H	A	N	I	I
E	P	B	C	A	N	Y	H	P	T	S	O
H	R	A	U	U	L	F	U	E	R	E	N
R	A	B	O	V	E	S	R	P	R	I	T
A	A	I	N	O	M	U	E	N	P	I	S
A	W	H	B	L	L	S	T	L	U	D	A

(Answers on this page.)

# It's a fact...

- After development of the polio vaccine in the 1960s, polio has virtually disappeared from North America.
- Rates of polio, measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough) and meningitis caused by HiB have declined by 95 percent to 100 percent since the introduction of vaccines for the diseases.
- The chickenpox (varicella) vaccine was licensed for use in 1995 in this country. Since then, there has been a dramatic decline in the number of cases of chickenpox in Americans of all ages.
- Routine immunization has eliminated smallpox around the world.

## Diagnostic information

### Your child's immunization schedule

Do you have your child's immunizations in check? By the age of 13 your child should have had:

- One meningococcal vaccine
- Two MMR (measles/mumps/rubella) vaccinations
- Three hepatitis B and two hepatitis A vaccinations
- One Tdap vaccine (if the child has completed the recommended childhood DTP/DTaP series and has not received a Td booster)
- Varicella vaccine if the child hasn't had chickenpox or the vaccination

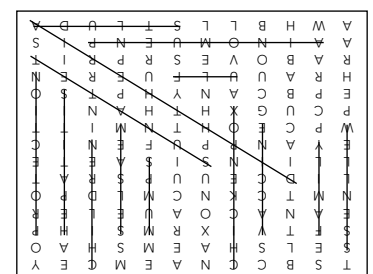
### Do you need a shingles vaccine?

Anyone who has had chickenpox as a child can develop shingles. Even healthy adults who managed to escape chickenpox as children could get chickenpox later in life. In clinical trials, the vaccine prevented shingles in about half of people 60 years of age and older and reduced the pain associated with shingles in the others. A single dose of shingles vaccine is recommended for adults 60 or older.

## Resources

Keeping tabs on your child's immunization schedule is crucial to his or her health

BCN covers well child visits and immunizations, so you can ensure your child is on track. For a complete list of immunizations, go to [MiBCN.com/guidelines](http://MiBCN.com/guidelines).



Words of Wellness Word Search answers: