

# August is National Immunization Awareness Month



Immunizations help prevent dangerous and sometimes deadly diseases in both children and adults. To increase public awareness of the importance of immunizations, the **Louisiana State Board of Nursing** is proudly promoting National Immunization Awareness Month.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Before the middle of the last century, diseases like whooping cough, polio, measles, *Haemophilus influenza*, and rubella infected hundreds of thousands of infants, children, and adults in the United States. Thousands died every year. As vaccines became widely used, rates of these diseases decreased until now, when most of them are gone from our country.

- Nearly everyone in the U.S. got measles before there was a vaccine, and hundreds died from it each year. Today, most doctors have never seen a case of measles.
- More than 15,000 Americans died from diphtheria in 1921, before there was a vaccine. Only one case of diphtheria has been reported to CDC since 2004.
- An epidemic of rubella (German measles) in 1964-65 infected 12½ million Americans, killed 2,000 babies, and caused 11,000 miscarriages. In 2012, nine cases of rubella were reported to CDC.

As you can see, vaccines work, but . . .

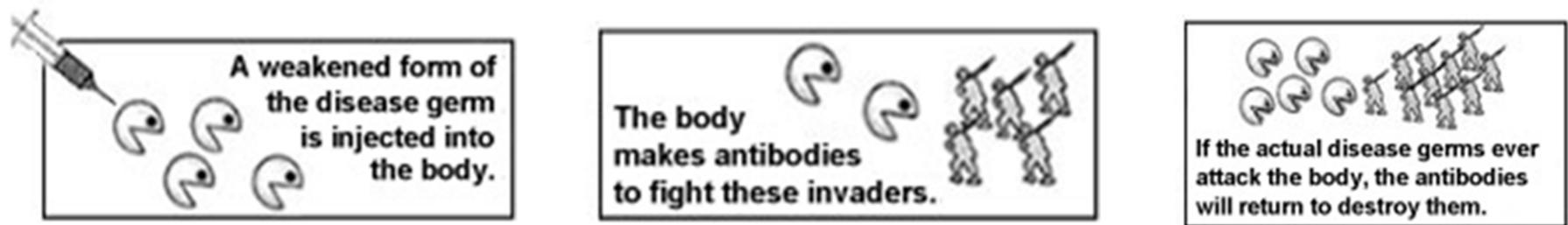
## DISEASES HAVEN'T DISAPPEARED

The United States has very low rates of vaccine-preventable diseases, but this isn't true everywhere. If we let ourselves become vulnerable by not vaccinating, one case from another country could trigger an outbreak. Although many diseases are rare in this country, they do circulate around the world and can be brought into the United States by travelers.



## UNDERSTANDING HOW VACCINES WORK

Vaccines imitate an infection to help us develop immunity without suffering from the actual disease. Here's how:



Sometimes, after getting a vaccine, the imitation infection can cause minor symptoms, such as fever. This is normal and should be expected as your body builds immunity to the disease. **These symptoms do not mean you are sick!**

## ADULTS NEED VACCINES TOO!

Vaccines are still important for adults. Here are just a few reasons why.

- You may be at risk for serious diseases that are still common in the U.S. Even if you were fully vaccinated as a child, the protection from some vaccines wears off over time.
- Vaccines reduce your chance of getting sick as well as the chance of suffering complications from these diseases.
- Vaccines reduce your chance of spreading certain diseases to others. Infants, older adults, and people with weak immune systems (like those undergoing cancer treatment) are especially vulnerable to vaccine preventable diseases.
- You can't afford to risk getting sick. If you're sick, you may not be able to take care of your family and other obligations, and you will need to miss work.

See the chart below for the Centers for Disease Control's recommendations on adult vaccination.

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Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2013, February). Understanding how Vaccines Work. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/patient-ed/conversations/downloads/vacsafe-understand-color-office.pdf>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2014, May 19). Vaccines and Immunizations. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vac-gen/whatifstop.htm>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2014, June). 3 Important Reasons for Adults to Get Vaccinated. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/patient-ed/adults/downloads/fs-three-reasons.pdf>

## Vaccines every adult needs:

Influenza (flu)	<b>WHO?</b> All adults, including pregnant women during any trimester <b>HOW OFTEN?</b> Every flu season
Tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (whooping cough) (Tdap) Tetanus and diphtheria (Td)	<b>WHO?</b> All adults who have never received the Tdap vaccine and pregnant women <b>HOW OFTEN?</b> Everyone needs Tdap one time, no matter when you got your last tetanus (Td) vaccine. Pregnant women need a Tdap dose during every pregnancy. Td vaccine, to protect against tetanus and diphtheria, is needed every 10 years.

## Vaccines you may need based on your age:

Human papillomavirus (HPV) Recommended if you haven't received the full 3-shot series	<b>WHO?</b> Females age 26 or younger Males age 21 or younger Males age 26 or younger who have weakened immune systems or HIV, or have sex with men <b>HOW OFTEN?</b> One time series of three doses
Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)* Recommended as a catch up if you didn't receive as a child	<b>WHO?</b> Adults born in the United States in 1957 or later who have not received MMR vaccine, or who had lab tests that showed they are not immune to measles, mumps, and rubella <b>HOW OFTEN?</b> One time for most adults; however certain people like college students, international travelers, or healthcare professionals, should get two doses.
Pneumococcal (pneumonia, meningitis)	<b>WHO?</b> Adults 65 or older <b>HOW OFTEN?</b> Two pneumococcal vaccines are recommended. Get one dose of PCV13 (conjugate vaccine) followed by one dose of PPSV23 (polysaccharide vaccine), ideally 6-12 months later.
Shingles (Zoster)	<b>WHO?</b> Adults 60 or older <b>HOW OFTEN?</b> One time
Varicella (chickenpox)* Recommended as a catch up if you didn't receive as a child	<b>WHO?</b> Adults born in the United States in 1980 or later who never had two doses of the vaccine or never had chickenpox <b>HOW OFTEN?</b> One time series of two doses

*\*Live vaccines should not be given to pregnant women or people who have a much weakened immune system.*

**You may need additional vaccines based upon your history and risk factors. Check with your doctor today!**

Adapted from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). Vaccines: Know What You Need. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/patient-ed/adults/downloads/fs-vaccines-need.pdf>