

Why Vaccinate? Why Vaccinate?

The purpose of immunization is to prevent diseases. Since we don't see these diseases everyday, it is common to not be concerned about them. But we know these diseases still occur and a single case of the disease will only remain a single case if everyone around the infected is immune.

Measles

Measles is a highly contagious virus that can be spread by coming into contact with an infected person or the infected person's saliva through coughing and sneezing. It can cause serious illnesses such as pneumonia and encephalitis (inflammation of the brain). Two doses of vaccine provide lifelong protection. The vaccine can be administered alone or as part of the combination Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) shot.

Mumps

Mumps is mainly a disease of young children, but about 15 percent of reported cases occur among teens and adults. Mumps can cause deafness, encephalitis, meningitis and, rarely, sterility. Mumps vaccine is routinely administered as part of the MMR shot.

Rubella

Rubella (German measles) is caused by a virus that is spread by contact with infected people or articles that they have used. Symptoms can include rash, muscle pain, low-grade fever and swelling in the neck. Rubella is especially dangerous for the fetus during the first three months of pregnancy. The pregnant woman may miscarry or the baby may be born with birth defects. Rubella is routinely administered as part of the MMR shot or may be given as a single component vaccine.

Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is a serious liver disease caused by a virus. The virus can be spread by coming into contact with the blood or other bodily fluids of an infected person. Hepatitis B virus can cause inflammation of the liver, which can lead to serious illness, liver cancer and liver failure. Immunity is achieved by receiving a series of three injections of vaccine over a 6-month period.

Meningitis

Although meningitis is rare, it is potentially fatal when it strikes. Meningococcal meningitis is a bacterial infection that causes inflammation of the membranes surrounding the brain and spinal cord. The infection can lead to permanent disabilities, such as hearing loss and brain damage. College students living in residence halls are at increased risk for developing the infection. One shot of the vaccine provides protection for approximately three to five years.

Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis A virus. Good personal hygiene and proper sanitation can help prevent hepatitis A. The virus is spread from person to person by putting something in the mouth (even though it looks clean) that has been contaminated with the stool of a person with Hepatitis A. Hepatitis A can cause abdominal pain, fever, and diarrhea. Vaccines are also available for long-term prevention of hepatitis A virus infection in persons 12 months of age and older. Immune globulin is available for short-term prevention of hepatitis A virus infection in individuals of all ages.

Polio

Polio is an infectious disease caused by a virus that lives in the throat and intestinal tract. It is most often spread through person-to-person contact with the stool of an infected person and may also be spread through oral/nasal secretions. Most people infected with the polio virus have no symptoms, however for the less than 1% who develop paralysis it may result in permanent disability and even death. Most people get polio vaccine when they are children.

Varicella (Chickenpox)

Chickenpox is a disease caused by infection with the varicella zoster virus, which causes fever and an itchy rash. It is spread by coughing and sneezing (highly contagious), by direct contact, and by aerosolization of virus from skin lesions. College students are considered a susceptible population (because you live and work where transmission can occur) if not already immune because of the more severe disease of chickenpox. The varicella vaccine is the best way to prevent chickenpox.

Tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis

Tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis are all caused by bacteria. Diphtheria and pertussis are spread from person to person. Tetanus enters the body through cuts or wounds. TETANUS (Lockjaw) causes painful tightening of the muscles, usually all over the body. It can lead to "locking" of the jaw so the victim cannot open his mouth or swallow. Tetanus leads to death in up to 2 cases out of 10. DIPHTHERIA causes a thick covering in the back of the throat. It can lead to breathing problems, paralysis, heart failure, and even death. PERTUSSIS (Whooping Cough) causes severe coughing spells, vomiting, and disturbed sleep. It can lead to weight loss, incontinence, rib fractures and passing out from violent coughing, pneumonia, and hospitalization due to complications.

HPV (Human Papillomavirus Vaccine) (women only)

Genital human papillomavirus (H.P.V.) is one of the most common sexually transmitted viruses. H.P.V. is spread through sexual contact. Most H.P.V. infections don't cause any symptoms, and go away on their own. But H.P.V. is important mainly because it can cause cervical cancer in women. It is the 2nd leading cause of cancer deaths among women around the world. H.P.V. vaccine can prevent most genital warts and most cases of cervical cancer.

Influenza

Influenza ("flu") is a contagious disease. It is caused by the influenza virus, which spreads from infected persons to the nose or throat of others. It can cause fever, sore throat, chills, fatigue, cough, headache, and muscle aches. Influenza can lead to pneumonia. A yearly influenza vaccination should be considered for students living in dormitories or under other crowded conditions, to prevent outbreaks. It is also recommended for anyone who wants to reduce the likelihood of becoming ill with influenza or spreading influenza to others.

Pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine

Pneumococcal disease is a serious disease that causes much sickness and death. Some people are at greater risk from the disease. These include people 65 and older, the very young, and people with special health problems such as alcoholism, heart or lung disease, kidney failure, diabetes, HIV infection, or certain types of cancer. Pneumococcal disease can lead to serious infections of the lungs (pneumonia), the blood (bacteremia), and the covering of the brain (meningitis).

Drugs such as penicillin were once effective in treating these infections; but the disease has become more resistant to these drugs, making treatment of pneumococcal infections more difficult. This makes prevention of the disease through vaccination even more important.

For more information on immunizations visit: www.immunize.org or www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo
This information is for educational purposes only. For specific medical advice, diagnoses, and treatment, consult your doctor

