

# Have You Heard About Vaccines for Adults but Have Some Questions?

This information sheet may answer some of your questions. Your doctor or other healthcare provider is the best person to answer questions about your health situation.

## HOW WELL DO VACCINES WORK?

- As a result of immunization in the United States, some diseases have declined to near zero cases.
- Vaccines currently recommended for adults range in their ability to prevent disease. For example, virtually 100% of tetanus is prevented, and about 50% of shingles is prevented with current vaccines. Flu prevention varies each year depending on how well the vaccine matches the viruses that spread that year.
- Experts carefully study vaccine benefits and risks and only recommend them when the benefits are greater than the risks.
- Even though 100% of the diseases are not prevented in all people who get the vaccines, experts agree that the protection outweighs the side effects associated with getting vaccines.
- Information on unprotected people who have gotten the disease is available at [www.immunize.org/reports](http://www.immunize.org/reports).
- Please see [www.vaccineinformation.org](http://www.vaccineinformation.org) for information on individual adult vaccines.

## DO VACCINES CAUSE PROBLEMS?

Like any medication, vaccines can cause side effects, and each vaccine is different.

- In general, most side effects are mild (for example, a sore arm or low-grade fever), go away within hours or a few days, and require no treatment.
- Side effect information is provided in Vaccine Information Statements available at [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis) and also at your doctor's office.
- Vaccines are continually monitored for safety (for more information see [www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/Vaccine\\_Monitoring](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/Vaccine_Monitoring)). If vaccines are given according to the recommendations, the chance of having a serious side effect is exceedingly rare, and much less than the chance of getting the disease if you do not get the vaccine.
- People who experience rare and serious side effects are watched closely, and help is available through the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program at [www.hrsa.gov/vaccinecompensation](http://www.hrsa.gov/vaccinecompensation).

## HAVE MORE QUESTIONS?

Ask your doctor or other healthcare provider, or visit [www2a.cdc.gov/nip/adultimmsched](http://www2a.cdc.gov/nip/adultimmsched), to determine which vaccines you should have. Helpful information is also on these Web sites: [www.vaccines.gov/basics](http://www.vaccines.gov/basics) (includes a glossary of vaccine terms) and [www.immunize.org](http://www.immunize.org). By the way, doctors and their families get these vaccines to protect themselves, their loved ones, and their patients, too!

