



### Japan: A Case In Point

In 1974, the majority of Japanese children received the whooping cough (pertussis) vaccine. This resulted in less than 400 cases of the disease and no deaths. By 1979, only 10% of children got the vaccine and more than 13,000 people got whooping cough and 41 died from it. When the vaccines became routine again, the disease numbers dropped.

## It's Not Just Flu Shot Season Time to Review Your Vaccination Status

Vaccines are among the most cost-effective prevention services around. They do more than protect you from getting preventable diseases; they also reduce the spread of disease. If you've been vaccinated for an infectious disease (measles, chickenpox, hepatitis, influenza, etc.), you greatly reduce the risk of getting that disease and the chance of spreading it to others who are not immune.

HealthPeople.gov reports that childhood vaccinations prevent 14 million cases of disease, save 33,000 lives, reduce direct healthcare costs by \$9.9 billion, and save \$33.4 billion in indirect costs, such as lost time and productivity for parents when their children are sick.

### Not Just for Children

Many adults do not realize that vaccines are recommended for them too. Some adults were never vaccinated as children and newer vaccines were not available when many adults were children. Plus, immunity can fade over time, and as we age, our risk for serious illness caused by common infections increases. Adults can take advantage of protection from several serious diseases that can make you feel lousy, be expensive to treat and require time away from work and family responsibilities.

People with diabetes, heart disease or

other chronic conditions are more likely to develop complications from vaccine-preventable diseases, which can lead to long-term illness, hospitalization and even death. Keeping up to date with vaccinations can also help protect those who, because of their health conditions, can't safely be vaccinated. If you are vaccinated, you help prevent the spread of disease to those who are vulnerable to illness.

### No One Likes to Get Sick!

What can you do to stay healthy? Discuss the following common adult vaccinations with your doctor.

- An annual **influenza or flu vaccine** is the best way to protect you and your family from getting the flu virus and its associated problems (doctor's visits, missed work/school, hospitalization). The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that there have been as many as 700,000 flu-related hospitalizations and 56,000 flu-related deaths in the U.S. since 2010. The CDC recommends the use of the flu shot (not the nasal spray flu vaccine) for the 2017-18 flu season. Children from 6 months of age and all adults, including pregnant women, can receive the vaccine. Since it takes 2 weeks for the vaccination to become fully effec-

### Antiviral Medications

Antiviral medications are not a substitute for getting the flu vaccine but they can be helpful for treating the flu. When prescribed early, antivirals can lessen symptoms and shorten the length of sickness. They are most commonly used for those who become very ill with the flu (such as people requiring hospitalization) and people at high-risk for serious complications because of their age or medical conditions. They are not usually necessary for people who get the flu but are otherwise healthy.

***The flu vaccine is the first and best way to prevent getting the seasonal flu!***

*The information contained in this newsletter is for general, educational purposes. It should not be considered a replacement for consultation with your healthcare provider. If you have concerns about your health, please contact your healthcare provider.*

tive, it's best to get the vaccine early in the fall before flu season begins. The CDC recommends having it by the end of October. While earlier is best, getting it later can still provide protection from the flu.

- **Tdap** is a combination vaccine that protects against 3 bacterial infections: tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (whooping cough). Tdap is typically given at age 11 or 12 but anyone who did not receive it at that age should get it as soon as possible, especially healthcare professionals and people who have close contact with children younger than 12 months. Pregnant women are advised to receive the vaccine during their third trimester (of every pregnancy) to protect their newborn from pertussis. A tetanus (Td) booster is given every 10 years or following a severe cut or burn.
- **HPV** (Human Papilloma Virus) is the major cause of cervical cancer in women, as well as anal cancer and genital warts in men and women. The CDC recommends 2 doses (recently changed from 3 doses) of the HPV vaccine given 6-12 months apart for girls and boys at age 11 or 12. Teens that did not start or finish the HPV vaccine series should get it as soon as possible. It is recommended for young women through age 26; young men through age 21; young men who have sex with men and transgender adults through age 26; and young adults with compromised immune systems (such as HIV) through age 26.
- **Shingles** is a painful skin rash caused by the varicella zoster virus, the virus that causes chickenpox. The shingles vaccine is a

one-time shot recommended for adults 60 years or older. It reduces the risk of developing shingles by 51% and decreases long-lasting pain (post-herpetic neuralgia) by 67%. One in 3 adults over 60 gets shingles. Older patients are more likely to develop long-term pain as a complication of shingles. Even if the vaccine doesn't prevent you from getting shingles, it can reduce the chance of having long-term pain.

- **Pneumonia** is caused by bacteria that has spread from the nose and throat to the lungs, blood or spinal cord. Pneumonia can be very serious and can result in long-term problems or death. For protection, adults 65 years or older need a single dose of the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV13), followed a year or so later by a single dose of the pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPSV23). The vaccines are also recommended for smokers and younger adults with heart disease, diabetes, lung disease, and weakened immune systems.

Are you up-to-date on your vaccinations? If you are not sure, ask your provider. Still not sure? Discuss your options with your provider, and keep records of any vaccines and other treatments you receive. Be sure to discuss any concerns you have about vaccines, including fear of needles or potential side effects. Your provider can help you feel more comfortable and explain the long-term benefits.

Your KnovaSolutions nurse can also discuss any vaccine concerns you have and offer information about vaccinations recommended for you. Let us help you weigh the risks and benefits of vaccinations. **Call KnovaSolutions at 800/355-0885**, M-F, 8 am - 5 pm, Mountain Time.