

IMMUNIZATIONS—

NOT JUST KIDS' PLAY

Every year, thousands of American children are immunized, but what many adults don't realize is that they may also need an immunization. Keeping up with regular immunizations can prevent thousands of people from being hospitalized due to life-threatening illnesses, illnesses that can easily be prevented by a simple vaccination.

- ◆ Pneumonia and influenza ("flu") combined are the sixth leading cause of death in the U.S. Most of these deaths occur in people aged 65 and older. The influenza vaccine can prevent up to 70 percent of hospitalizations and 85 percent of deaths caused from flu-related pneumonia.
- ◆ The flu virus changes annually, so it is important for people to be revaccinated each year. It is best to receive the flu shot in October or November at the beginning of flu season.
- ◆ There is a common misconception that all vaccines can cause the disease they are intended to prevent. This is a MYTH! It is impossible to get a disease from any vaccine made with killed bacteria or viruses. Only immunizations made from weakened (attenuated) live viruses, like varicella (chicken pox), measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) or the intranasal flu vaccine (FluMist™) could possibly make a person develop a mild form of the disease. But this vaccine effect is always much less severe than contracting the illness itself, and the risk of it even occurring is extremely small.
- ◆ The following is the 2004 Recommended Adult Immunization Schedule:
 - Influenza—one dose annually if > 50 years old, those with chronic diseases or pregnant women
 - Tetanus—one dose booster every 10 years
 - Pneumococcal—one dose if > 65 years old or those with chronic diseases
 - Hepatitis B—three dose series; designed for everyone < 18 years old and for high risk adults; especially healthcare workers, people with multiple sex partners and IV drug users
 - Hepatitis A—two dose series; for anyone > 2 years old traveling or working in countries with high rates of Hepatitis A (Central or South America, Caribbean, Mexico, Asia [other than Japan], Africa and southern or eastern Europe); first dose should be taken at least one month prior to travel
 - MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella)—one dose if vaccination history for MMR is unreliable; two doses for persons with occupational or other indications
 - Varicella (Chicken Pox)—two dose series; for persons who are susceptible (those who have never had chicken pox)
 - Meningococcal—one dose; for those at risk, as well as college freshman living in dormitories

IMMUNIZATIONS SAVE LIVES!

Are you up-to-date on your immunizations?
For more information, ask your pharmacist!

