

Immunizations for people with diabetes

Description

Immunizations (vaccines or vaccinations) help protect you from some diseases. When you have diabetes, you're more likely to get severe infections because your immune system doesn't work as well. Vaccines can prevent illnesses that can be very serious and can put you in the hospital.

Vaccines have an inactive, small part of a certain germ. This germ is often a virus or bacteria. After you get a vaccine, your body learns to attack that virus or bacteria if you are infected. This means you have less of a chance of getting sick than if you did not get the vaccine. Or you may just have a much milder illness.

Below are some of the vaccines you need to know about. Ask your health care provider which are right for you.

Pneumococcal Vaccine

Pneumococcal vaccine can help protect you from serious infections due to the pneumococcal bacteria. These infections include:

- In the blood (bacteremia)
- Of the covering of the brain (meningitis)
- In the lungs (pneumonia)

You need at least one shot. A second shot may be needed if you had the first shot more than 5 years ago and you are now over age 65 years.

Most people have no or only minor side effects from the vaccine. You may have some pain and redness at the site where you get the shot.

This vaccine has a very small chance of a serious reaction.

Flu Shot

The flu (influenza) vaccine helps protect you from the flu. Each year, the type of flu virus that makes people sick is different. This is why you should get a flu shot every year. The best time to get the shot is in the early fall, so that you'll be protected all flu season, which usually lasts mid-fall until the following spring.

People with diabetes who are 6 months or older should get the flu vaccine each year.

The vaccine is given as a shot (injection). Flu shots can be given to healthy people 6 months or older. One type of shot is injected into a muscle (often the upper arm muscle). Another type is injected just under the skin. Your provider can tell you which shot is right for you.

In general, you should not get a flu shot if you:

- Have a severe allergy to chickens or egg protein
- Currently have a fever or illness that is more than "just a cold"
- Had a bad reaction to a previous flu vaccine

Hepatitis B Vaccine

The hepatitis B vaccine helps protect you from getting a liver infection due to the hepatitis B virus. People with diabetes ages 19 through 59 years should get the vaccine. Your doctor can tell you if this vaccine is right for you.

Other Important Vaccines

Other vaccines that you may need are:

- Hepatitis A
- Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis)
- MMR (measles, mumps, rubella)
- Herpes zoster (shingles)
- Polio

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