

*Staying up to date with vaccinations protects you and those around you from serious and potentially fatal diseases. Ask your healthcare provider for advice on which vaccines are right for you.*



### More information

WHO recommendations on the safety of immunization during pregnancy [http://www.who.int/vaccine\\_safety/publications/safety\\_immunization\\_pregnancy/en/](http://www.who.int/vaccine_safety/publications/safety_immunization_pregnancy/en/)

WHO recommended immunization schedule for children and adults  
[http://www.who.int/immunization/policy/immunization\\_tables/en/](http://www.who.int/immunization/policy/immunization_tables/en/)

WHO recommendations for health workers:  
[http://www.who.int/immunization/policy/immunization\\_tables/en/](http://www.who.int/immunization/policy/immunization_tables/en/)

WHO vaccine position papers  
<http://www.who.int/immunization/documents/positionpapers/en/>

Learn more about European Immunization Week and find activities in your country on the Immunize Europe Forum ([www.immunize-europe.org](http://www.immunize-europe.org)) and the WHO/Europe website ([www.euro.who.int/eiw](http://www.euro.who.int/eiw)) For more information contact [euvaccine@who.int](mailto:euvaccine@who.int)

#VaccinesWork  
#ImmunizeEurope

# Vaccines for adults

Vaccines offer protection at all ages.



*Were you vaccinated against measles as a child?  
When was the last time you had a tetanus shot?  
Have you ever been exposed to hepatitis? Are you  
at special risk of complications from seasonal  
influenza?*

Many adults are susceptible to vaccine-preventable diseases without realizing it. Some vaccines were introduced in national immunization schedules after many of today's adults received their childhood vaccinations. Others require a booster dose in adulthood. Adults at special risk because of their age, health status, profession, lifestyle or travel may need additional vaccines for extra protection.

Thanks to the widespread use of vaccines, the threat of many diseases has been drastically reduced. But aside from smallpox, these diseases are not gone, and they infect adults as well as children. In 2016, one in four measles cases in the European Region occurred among adults 20 years or older. Hepatitis B, rubella and diphtheria also infected children and adults in 2016.

### What vaccines do you need and when?

Polio, measles, diphtheria and tetanus are dangerous at any age. All adults are advised to get vaccinated against measles and/or polio if:

- they never contracted either disease and
- did not receive the recommended number of vaccinations as a child or
- are not sure of their immunity status.

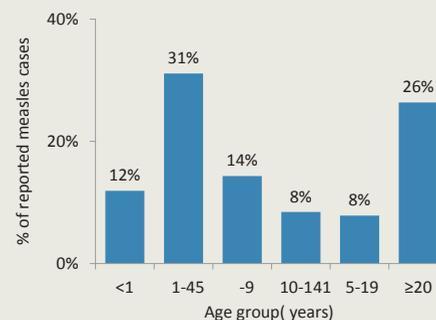
All adults need a booster shot against diphtheria and tetanus. Some countries also recommend a regular booster shot for all adults against pertussis. Immunity against these diseases gets weaker over time, so even those who were vaccinated as a child or teenager will need a booster shot to stay protected.

**Human papillomavirus (HPV)** is a common sexually transmitted disease that can lead to cervical cancer as well as genital warts.

Vaccination is most effective if given **before a person becomes sexually active**, preferably starting at 9-13 years of age. Three doses are recommended if you start the series after 15 years of age.

**Rubella** contracted in the early stages of pregnancy can seriously harm the unborn child, often leading to miscarriage or congenital rubella syndrome with heart deformities, blindness and/or hearing loss.

*Measles cases in the WHO European Region in 2016, by age group*



Source : WHO EpiBrief, 1/2017

All young women should make sure they are immune to rubella before becoming pregnant. Additional vaccines may be recommended for people who are at special risk of becoming infected with certain diseases, developing serious complications or passing infection on to others who are vulnerable.

- **Health workers**, certain **laboratory workers**, **young adults residing in closed communities** (such as boarding schools), people with **special health needs** (such as a weakened immune system) or certain **lifestyles** (such as injecting drug users or men who have sex with men) may need to be vaccinated against hepatitis A, hepatitis B, meningococcus and/or seasonal influenza, to protect themselves and their close contacts.
- **Pregnant women**: the seasonal influenza vaccine can help protect mother and baby during pregnancy, and some countries also recommend the pertussis vaccine near the end of pregnancy to protect newborns in their first months of life.
- **Older adults** may be eligible for several vaccines that prevent diseases of particular concern for older populations, such as pneumococcal disease, herpes zoster and seasonal influenza.
- **International travellers** may need protection from diseases not common in their home country or to provide proof of your immunization status against measles or polio. Be sure to review national travel recommendations. For more information see also the WHO international travel and health page: <http://www.who.int/ith/en/>