

IPC Topic: Importance of Vaccinations for Frontline Staff

Intro: As a healthcare worker, you may be exposed to different diseases. Some diseases are considered vaccine preventable, meaning that receiving a vaccine can reduce the spread or severity of the disease. Staying up to date on important vaccines for healthcare workers can reduce your chance of becoming seriously ill and spreading disease to others².

What is the Risk? Healthcare workers work closely with patients during care. When an infected person talks, breathes, sneezes, or coughs, they produce respiratory droplets that could spread germs. Viruses, like influenza and SARS-CoV-2 spread by respiratory droplets and touch¹⁰. Interacting with many people and touching items and equipment throughout the workday is an opportunity for germs to spread¹. Medical devices and equipment are a reservoir, and the pathway is touch⁹. Vaccinations work by boosting our immune system, which reduces your risk of getting sick.

Highlights:

- **What is a vaccine?**
 - A medication that is used to make the body's immune response react against diseases. Vaccines are usually administered through needle injections, but some can be administered by mouth or sprayed into the nose.²
- **Why are vaccines important⁴?**
 - Vaccines are the best way to protect you and your clients from serious illness.
 - Vaccines help your body create protective antibodies.
 - Antibodies are proteins that your immune system makes to help fight infection and protect you from getting sick in the future¹².
 - Some people may not be able to get certain vaccines because of age or a health condition.
 - These vulnerable populations are less likely to catch a preventable disease when you as a healthcare worker and others around them are vaccinated against it⁴.
 - Vaccines are one of the safest ways to protect your health^{3,4}.
 - Vaccine side effects are usually mild and go away on their own. Severe side effects are very rare.
 - The most common side effects are fever, tiredness, body aches, or redness, swelling, and tenderness where the shot was given.
 - Recommended vaccines for frontline staff²?
 - Hepatitis B
 - Influenza (Flu)
 - MMR (Measles, Mumps, and Rubella)
 - Varicella (Chicken pox)
 - Tdap (Tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis)

- Meningococcal
 - Coronavirus (COVID-19)
 - Be sure to ask your healthcare provider regarding any boosters needed for the above vaccines.
- It's important to discuss with your primary care provider any questions you might have about vaccines. Some common questions are:
 - Are vaccines safe?
 - Yes. Millions of individuals safely receive vaccines each year. The most common side effects are very mild, such as pain or swelling at the injection site⁷.
 - Is it better to get sick with a disease than get a vaccine for it⁸?
 - No. These diseases can be serious, especially among young children, older adults, and people with certain chronic health conditions, such as asthma, heart disease or diabetes.
 - Any infection can carry a risk of serious complications, hospitalizations, or death, even among otherwise healthy children and adults. Therefore, getting vaccinated is a safer choice than risking illness to get immune protection.

Summary: Staying up to date on vaccination for healthcare workers is an important step in infection control and stopping the spread of germs. Vaccinations are one of the best ways to protect yourself and your clients from vaccine-preventable diseases.

For more information on recognizing risk and related Project Firstline materials, see References below:

1. [What Does It Mean to Recognize a Risk? \(cdc.gov\)](#)
2. [Recommended Vaccines for Healthcare Workers | CDC](#)
3. [Immunization Basics | CDC](#)
4. [Reasons for Adults to be Vaccinated | CDC](#)
5. [3 Important Reasons For Adults to Get Vaccinated Fact Sheet \(cdc.gov\)](#)
6. [Vaccines Know What You Need - Information Series for Adults \(cdc.gov\)](#)
7. [Answers to Your Most Common Questions about Childhood Vaccines | CDC](#)
8. [Misconceptions about Seasonal Flu and Flu Vaccines | CDC](#)
9. [Germs Live in the Environment | Project Firstline | Infection Control | CDC](#)
10. [Germs can live in the respiratory system \(cdc.gov\)](#)
11. [Healthcare Personnel Vaccination Recommendations \(immunize.org\)](#)
12. [Getting Your COVID-19 Vaccine | CDC](#)
13. [Vaccines and Immunizations: For Healthcare Professionals | CDC](#)
14. [Vaccination Resources for Educating Healthcare Workers | CDC](#)