

Vaccines Protect Our Health

You never outgrow the need for vaccines. Vaccines have led to large reductions in sickness and death for both adults and children. According to a vaccine expert at the University of Washington in Seattle, "Vaccines will prevent about 322 million illnesses, 21 million hospitalizations, and 732,000 deaths among U.S. children born over the last 20 years."

Vaccinations have significantly reduced the incidence of childhood diseases in the U.S and other developed countries, but some of these diseases still exist in under developed areas in the world. Small pox has been eradicated and a vaccine is no longer necessary. Polio, a disease that can cause paralysis, is close to being extinct and only exists in small pockets around the world. Unfortunately, many disabling and life threatening diseases still exist in other countries. Because international travel is so easy, the germs have become mobile. Even if you don't travel internationally, others do and can spread the illnesses in unvaccinated individuals. For example, measles was completely eliminated in the U.S. in 2000. Since that time, hundreds of travel related cases have occurred with a spike of over 600 measles cases in 2014.

When enough people are vaccinated, the entire community benefits. This protection is important to the most vulnerable individuals to disease including newborns, the elderly and people with serious illnesses such as heart disease and cancer.

The experts at the CDC recommend that all healthy children and teenagers receive vaccines against sixteen diseases including:

- Bacterial meningitis
- Chickenpox
- Diphtheria
- *Haemophilus influenzae* type b
- Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B
- Cervical cancer (caused by human papillomavirus)
- Influenza (flu)
- Measles, Mumps, and Rubella
- Pertussis (whooping cough)
- Pneumococcal pneumonia
- Rotavirus diarrhea
- Shingles
- Tetanus

Ask your doctor's office if you and your family's vaccinations are current. Both routine and travel vaccines are available at PharmaCare. Contact Lisa Bohrer, R.N.,BC for more information or to schedule an appointment at 301-689-2909.

For more information regarding vaccines, visit www.cdc.gov.

This article was submitted by Lisa Bohrer, R.N.,BC, the Community Health and Wellness Manager and Certified Travel Medicine Specialist, for the PharmaCare Network. For more information, contact her at 301-689-2909 or lbohrer@3ipc.com.