



# The Safety Zone

The Newsletter of the AHA Workers' Compensation Self-Insured Trust

## Vaccines are for adults, too

*Learn about adult vaccines*

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), many adults become ill, are disabled, and die each year from diseases that could have been prevented by vaccines. Vaccines not only prevent disease in the people who receive them but often create “herd immunity,” meaning that even unvaccinated individuals are at lower risk of disease if most of their community is immunized. With this in mind, the CDC recommends the following vaccination schedule for all adults:

- **Influenza.** The flu kills 36,000 Americans annually. Every year, a new strain emerges and a new vaccine is formulated. All adults should be vaccinated for influenza annually in the fall, before flu season begins.
- **Pneumococcal vaccine.** Pneumococcal pneumonia and invasive pneumococcal infections kill 15,000 Americans each year. The pneumococcal conjugate vaccine given to young children was not available until 2000, so many adults may never have been immunized against this disease. The adult vaccine protects against 23 strains of pneumonia. Adults 19 and older who are at increased risk of contracting pneumonia should be vaccinated. Risk factors include chronic heart or lung disease, diabetes, alcoholism and liver disease, and anyone who is immunocompromised. At age 65, all adults should receive the vaccine.
- **Tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis.** These diseases are included in childhood immunizations, but immunity fades over time. All adults should receive the Tdap vaccine, which protects against all three diseases, with a Td booster to protect against tetanus and diphtheria every 10 years thereafter.



- **Varicella.** Adults who get varicella (chicken pox) are at far greater risk of complications from this disease than children. The CDC recommends that adults who have not received the varicella vaccine and haven't yet had chicken pox receive two doses.

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### news & notes

#### CONSIDER VACCINATING

Generally, young children are vaccinated because their immune systems are more susceptible to disease. Preventing epidemics of communicable diseases in children tends to also protect the entire population.

Nationwide, however, exemptions from vaccination requirements to attend school have been increasing. A recent CDC survey indicated that two percent of U.S. students are exempt.

With fewer children being immunized, the entire population is placed at greater risk for vaccine-preventable diseases. In addition, some vaccines are new, meaning that adults might not have received them as children, and other vaccines change periodically.

Adults' susceptibility to diseases they were once vaccinated against is most pronounced in older workers. With the average age of the workforce increasing—employment of workers aged 65 and over increased 101 percent from 1977 to 2007, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics—vaccinations can play a pivotal role in protecting the health of these workers.



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- **Shingles.** Anyone who has had chicken pox, or who has not had chicken pox and has not been vaccinated against it, could eventually become ill with shingles, a very painful disease. Adults over age 60 should receive the shingles vaccine (also called the “zoster vaccine”) to prevent shingles.
- **Measles, mumps and rubella (MMR).** Anyone born before 1957, or who has had these diseases or been vaccinated against them, should be immune. Adults who have not been immunized or who have not had these diseases should receive one or two doses of the MMR vaccine.

**NOTE:** Individuals with certain medical conditions should not be vaccinated against some diseases. This information is available on a handy CDC chart at <http://1.usa.gov/1eLW4u0>.

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### Got News?

Do you have news that needs to be circulated or have a subject you would like for us to address? Let us know by emailing the newsletter editor at [tcreel@arkhospitals.org](mailto:tcreel@arkhospitals.org).

AHA Workers' Compensation Self-Insured Trust Program is administered by Risk Management Resources (RMR), a division of BancorpSouth Insurance Services, Inc. [www.bxsi.com](http://www.bxsi.com). In March 2003 the AHA Workers' Compensation Self-Insured Trust was established. The program provides workers' compensation coverage to AHA members.

Risk Management Resources, the administrator for the program, assists members in the areas of claims management, safety and loss control. Tina Creel, of AHA Services, Inc., is the Group Manager of the Trust and provides oversight of the day-to-day operation of the Trust.

The Board of Trustees provides oversight of the overall operation of the Group Trust.