

Immunisation for adults

The following information outlines the recommendations for adult immunisation. Immunisation recommendations depend on a number of individual factors. These factors may relate to:

- Underlying medical risk factors such as diseases of the heart, lung, kidneys and diabetes
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
- Pregnancy
- Being born overseas
- Age, for example turning 50 years of age or 65 years of age
- Lifestyle factors such as
 - travelling
 - participating in contact sport
 - sexual preference
 - drug use
- Workplace factors such as
 - working closely with infants and children
 - health care workers
 - sewerage workers
 - emergency service workers
- Community volunteers depending on the environment in which the volunteer works and the activities involved.

Please discuss your vaccine needs with your doctor.

If you previously started a vaccine course which you did not finish, you can have the missing dose or doses and you do not need to start the vaccine course again regardless of the time elapsed.

Some medical risk factors may mean that a person needs to be immunised differently or immunisations are withheld for a period of time or even repeated following some medical treatment. Other diseases not listed may also need to be considered in some cases such as for travel. Travel vaccine advice should be obtained from your doctor.

Combination vaccines protecting against two or three different diseases are often used. Having immunity to one disease in a combination vaccine does not mean you cannot be given the vaccine. It is not harmful to be vaccinated and may boost protection for that disease.

View the Better health channel for more detail on each disease at:
<http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/>

<p>Tetanus, Diphtheria & Pertussis (Whooping cough)</p>	<p>Adults should have previously received a minimum of 3 doses of a vaccine containing tetanus, diphtheria and whooping cough as a baby. Two booster doses with a 10 yearly interval should also have been given as a child. If there is doubt about your vaccine history, a course of 3 doses given by injection at minimum 4 weekly intervals, followed by 2 booster doses at 10 yearly intervals is recommended. A booster dose of a tetanus and diphtheria containing vaccine is available free between 50 and 59 years of age in Victoria.</p> <p>The first injection should be given as a combination vaccine containing tetanus, diphtheria and whooping cough and the following doses as a tetanus and diphtheria containing vaccine.</p> <p>Whooping cough vaccine protection given as a child reduces over time. Therefore a booster dose of whooping cough containing vaccine is recommended for adults, especially: parents planning pregnancy or as soon as possible after delivery of the baby; adults living with, caring for or working with infants and young children.</p> <p><i>View the Better health channel for more detail: http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/</i></p>
<p>Poliomyelitis</p>	<p>Adults should have previously received at least 3 doses of a polio containing vaccine. If there is doubt about your vaccine history, a 3 dose course of injections at minimum 4 weekly intervals is recommended. Booster doses are only required if a person is travelling to areas where there is polio disease or is in a health care profession where there may be possible contact with polio cases.</p> <p><i>View the Better health channel for more detail: http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/</i></p>
<p>Measles, Mumps & Rubella</p>	<p>Adults born since 1966 should have previously received 2 doses of measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) containing vaccine(s) after the age of 12 months. Adults born before 1966 are considered to be protected against measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) as they are most likely to have had these diseases and have natural immunity.</p> <p>Women planning pregnancy or shortly after delivery with low or negative rubella protection (as shown on a blood test) should have a free MMR vaccine. Women should not be given the vaccine if already pregnant and pregnancy should be avoided for 28 days after vaccination.</p> <p>The MMR vaccine course is 2 doses, given at minimum 4 weeks apart.</p> <p><i>View the Better health channel for more detail: http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/</i></p>

<p>Meningococcal C</p>	<p>Meningococcal C immunisation is recommended for young adults who have not previously been vaccinated especially between the ages of 15 and 24 years as this is a peak time for infection in this age group. The vaccine is also recommended for people with no spleen or a poorly functioning spleen.</p> <p>Meningococcal C vaccine is given by injection as a single dose.</p> <p><i>View the Better health channel for more detail:</i> http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/</p>
<p>Hepatitis A</p>	<p>Hepatitis A immunisation is not routinely recommended for everyone, however, there are circumstances when it is recommended to protect against hepatitis A infection as follows: child care workers; health care workers; travellers to developing countries; people living or working in rural and remote Indigenous communities; those whose occupation may put them at risk of hepatitis A; intellectually disabled people and their carers; intellectually disabled people; sewerage workers; men who have sex with men; injecting drug users; people with chronic hepatitis B or hepatitis C; people with liver disease; organ transplant recipients.</p> <p>A Hepatitis A vaccine course is 2 doses by injection, given 6 to 12 months apart.</p> <p><i>View the Better health channel for more detail:</i> http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/</p>
<p>Hepatitis B</p>	<p>Hepatitis B vaccine is strongly recommended for: staff of long-term correctional facilities; health care workers; dentists; embalmers; tattooists; body piercers; intellectually disabled people and their carers; household contacts of people living with hepatitis B; sexual contacts of hepatitis B positive people; men who have sex with men; people with reduced immunity; recipients of certain blood products; injecting drug users; individuals with chronic liver disease and/or hepatitis C; individuals adopting children from overseas; organ transplant recipients; inmates of long-term correctional facilities.</p> <p>Other groups recommended to consider hepatitis B immunisation include: staff of child day-care centres; funeral workers; travellers to countries where hepatitis B disease is fairly common; contact sport players; sex industry workers.</p> <p>The hepatitis B vaccine course is 3 doses given by injection and spaced with 1 month between the 1st and 2nd dose and 5 months between the 2nd and 3rd dose.</p> <p><i>View the Better health channel for more detail:</i> http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/</p>

<p>Human papillomavirus (HPV)</p>	<p>HPV vaccine is recommended and most effective when it is given to females before they are likely to be exposed to HPV; that is, before starting sexual contact.</p> <p>The HPV vaccine course is 3 doses given by injection and spaced with 1 to 2 months between the 1st and 2nd dose and 3 to 4 months between the 2nd and 3rd dose.</p> <p><i>View the Better health channel for more detail:</i> http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/</p>
<p>Shingles (Herpes Zoster)</p>	<p>Shingles vaccine is recommended for healthy people from 60 years of age. The vaccine is not as effective in people above 80 years of age. Shingles vaccine is also recommended for individuals 50 years of age and above who have household contact of a person with reduced immunity.</p> <p>Only 1 dose of shingles vaccine by injection is required.</p> <p><i>View the Better health channel for more detail:</i> http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/</p>
<p>Chickenpox</p>	<p>Any person who has had chickenpox illness is considered immune to chickenpox disease and does not require vaccination. Chickenpox vaccine is recommended for non-immune adults, especially health care workers, teachers, workers in child care centres, non-immune women prior to pregnancy, non-immune parents of young children, household contacts (parents, siblings) of people with lowered immunity.</p> <p>Adults with no history of chickenpox illness should have a blood test prior to immunisation to check if they are immune to chickenpox disease. Adults with no history of chickenpox illness can unknowingly be immune.</p> <p>The chickenpox vaccine course for adults is 2 doses given by injection with 1 to 2 months between doses.</p> <p><i>View the Better health channel for more detail:</i> http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/</p>
<p>Pneumococcal</p>	<p>Pneumococcal vaccination is recommended for all people aged 65 years and over, Indigenous people aged 50 years and over, Indigenous people 15 to 49 years of age with an underlying medical condition, people with lowered immunity, people with no spleen or poorly functional spleen and tobacco smokers.</p> <p>See your doctor for advice about the course of pneumococcal vaccine given by injection.</p> <p><i>View the Better health channel for more detail:</i> http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/</p>

Influenza

Influenza vaccination is an annual vaccination given in autumn prior to the influenza season. The vaccine is recommended for anyone from 6 months of age and above wishing to be protected against influenza. Influenza is especially recommended for: people aged 65 years and over; all Indigenous people aged 15 years and over; pregnant women during any stage of pregnancy; contacts/carers of the elderly; travellers and people providing essential services. Anyone from 6 months of age and over with medical conditions that can lead to severe illness such as: chronic heart, lung and kidney disease; low immunity; diabetes; and neurological conditions should also be immunised.

*View the Better health channel for more detail at:
<http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/>*

Further information

The following websites offer resources and further information and were used as a source for the information provided:

- Better health channel at: <http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/>
- Department of Health, Immunisation Program at: www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation
- Department of Health, Immunisation Program telephone 1300 882 008
- Australian Government, Immunise Australia at: www.immunise.health.gov.au

Where can I find information about travel vaccinations?

Some health problems associated with international travel are vaccine preventable. Travellers should consult a travel medical centre, or their local doctor, at least 6 - 12 weeks before departure, for a check-up and to discuss required and recommended vaccinations for specific regions.

The websites below provide information about vaccinations and tips for staying healthy while overseas:

- Smartraveller (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade);
- International travel and health (World Health Organization); and
- Travelers' health (US Center for Disease Control & Prevention).