

## Immunizations and Adults

We had an interesting discussion during our Tupelo Rotary Club meeting today. The club reserves a session quarterly for new members to tell us about themselves. A new member, who is the area's public health officer, was one of our speakers during our new member session. I admit that I was surprised and appreciative of the many questions our members asked about immunizations and adults. I am devoting this writing to answer some of those questions.

Tetanus immunization continues to be important throughout our life times. . Unfortunately, many adults let their tetanus immunization lapse after childhood or military service. The preventable disease of tetanus ("lock-jaw) is now more common in older adults than in children due to this lapse of immunization. The vaccine is usually combined with an immunization against pertussis and diphtheria.

Influenza immunization is also very important. There is increasing understanding that immunizing nearly everyone will be effective in stopping transmission of the disease from person-to-person. Of course, preventing transmission is very important in protecting our most vulnerable persons (those that are chronically ill, are HIV infected, or otherwise vulnerable).

Pneumococcal pneumonia immunization is very important for those with chronic illness, especially lung disease, and for anyone who has had their spleen removed. Pneumococcal pneumonia is a common killer in late adult years and all persons over 65 should receive the vaccine.

There are several other immunizations that are of benefit to adults. Some of the diseases for which there is a vaccine include: Hepatitis A & B, Human Papilloma Virus, Meningococcal Meningitis, Measles, Mumps, Rubella, and Varicella (Shingles). Excellent information about vaccines can be had at the American Academy of Family Physicians Immunization website located at:

<http://www.aafp.org/online/en/home/clinical/immunizationres/adultimmunizations.html>.

A schedule of adult vaccines is located at:

[http://www.aafp.org/online/etc/medialib/aafp\\_org/documents/clinical/clin\\_recs/adultimmunizations.Par.0001.File.tmp/AdultSched06-07.pdf](http://www.aafp.org/online/etc/medialib/aafp_org/documents/clinical/clin_recs/adultimmunizations.Par.0001.File.tmp/AdultSched06-07.pdf).

There is a good CDC website that goes into considerable detail on adult immunizations.

Those wishing more detail from the CDC should look at

<http://www.cdc.gov/node.do/id/0900f3ec8000e2f3>.

Vaccination is remarkably effective and safe. Please discuss these opportunities for prevention with your physician.

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