Have heart disease?  
Get the vaccines you need to stay healthy.

Vaccines can help you avoid serious illness and protect your heart too.

Why vaccines are important

» Vaccines are the best way to protect yourself – and those around you – from preventable diseases. These diseases can include the flu, COVID, pneumonia, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), which can be deadly.

» Some preventable illnesses – for example, the flu or COVID – can make a heart attack or stroke more likely, even after you’ve recovered.

» Heart disease makes it harder to fight off many diseases, which can make complications like pneumonia, heart attacks and stroke more likely.

1 out of 2 adults in the hospital due to the flu also have heart disease

There’s a 6x higher risk of heart attack in the week after being infected

That’s why your doctor, nurse, pharmacist and leading public health experts strongly recommended vaccines for people with heart and blood vessel diseases, diabetes and other conditions. Getting vaccinated will help prevent related health problems and can save lives.

» Vaccines aren’t just for kids. Adults need vaccines too because:
  • The protection (also called immunity) from childhood or earlier vaccines wears off. You need additional boosts of protection over time.
  • Different diseases affect adults (for example, shingles and pneumonia).

Don’t delay getting the vaccines you need! Talk about vaccines with your care team.

Staying up to date with vaccines can benefit your heart too – just like adopting heart-healthy habits and taking your medications.
Recommended vaccines

If you have heart disease, it’s important that you are up to date with these vaccines:

- **Flu vaccine** each year to protect against seasonal influenza (flu)
- **COVID vaccines** as they are available to give added protection against the latest strain
- **Pneumococcal vaccine** to protect against pneumonia and other pneumococcal diseases
- **RSV vaccine** to protect against respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) for those 60 and older
- **Tdap vaccine** to protect against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (whooping cough), needed every 10 years
- **Hep B vaccine** to protect against Hepatitis B, a serious disease caused by a virus that attacks the liver
- **Zoster vaccine** to protect against shingles for those 50 or older. Shingles is caused by the same virus that causes chickenpox, which awakens and becomes active again.
- **Other:**

Ask your health care team about these and other vaccines you might need. Check off those you discussed and need.

Where to find a flu vaccine

Many doctors’ offices  Your pharmacy  Your workplace  Community/public health clinic
How most vaccines work

A weakened or dead virus is introduced. → This triggers an immune response. Your body develops antibodies and is then primed to remember the virus. → If or when you get exposed to that virus, the antibodies recognize and fight it.

Vaccines save lives and prevent complications

Over 50 million deaths can be prevented before 2030.

The flu shot not only protects you from getting sick, but it can also prevent a related heart attack or stroke in people with heart disease.

Make a plan to get your flu shot, as well as your next COVID vaccine and any others you need when it’s time.

Get the facts

- Vaccines are safe and among the most well-studied medicines.
- Side effects are usually mild and go away quickly.
- For the vaccines listed in this handout, it’s impossible to get the disease that the vaccine is trying to prevent from the vaccine. Getting vaccinated can prevent serious illnesses and lower the chance of heart complications that could come with them.

Helpful tools

Use the Stay on Top of Your Vaccines worksheet to track your immunizations. It will help you keep a record of the vaccines you’ve had and when you got them. Scan the QR code to access this and other vaccine resources.