

My Life: Vaccines

People on dialysis have a higher risk of infection due to a lessened ability to fight disease. Your immunization record is needed when you start and while you are on dialysis. Influenza (flu), pneumonia, hepatitis B and TB screening are all recommended vaccines for people on dialysis.



Influenza (Flu) Vaccines

The flu is a disease caused by the influenza virus; it spreads from person to person through coughing or sneezing. The flu can lead to pneumonia and can be dangerous for people with heart or breathing problems. The flu kills about 36,000 people each year in the United States, most are elderly. The flu vaccine is updated every year because influenza viruses are always changing.

What I Should Know:

- A flu shot is recommended for people with chronic illness including kidney disease, diabetes and anemia.
- Get a flu shot every year to keep you protected.
- Get the flu shot in October or November before flu season starts.
- It takes about two weeks for protection to develop after the shot.
- Some people should not get the flu shot and others may need to wait. Tell your Care Team if you:
 - Have an allergy to eggs
 - Had a reaction to the flu vaccine in the past
 - Have a history of Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS)
 - Have a fever or are sick
- Serious problems from influenza vaccine are very rare.
- You cannot get the flu from the flu shot because the viruses in the flu shot have been inactivated.

(Source: www.cdc.gov/flu/keyfacts.htm)

Pneumococcal Disease (Pneumonia)

Pneumonia caused by pneumococcal bacteria is a serious disease that can cause sickness and death. This disease can lead to serious infections of the lungs, blood, and brain. In fact, pneumonia kills more people in the United States each year than all other vaccine preventable diseases combined. Drugs such as penicillin were once effective in treating these infections, but the disease has become more resistant to these drugs, making treatment more difficult. This makes prevention of the disease through vaccination even more important.

What I Should Know:

- Anyone can get pneumonia.
- A pneumonia shot is recommended for people with chronic illness including kidney disease, diabetes, heart or lung disease or certain types of cancer.
- A pneumonia shot is recommended for young children and people 65 and older.
- The pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPV) protects against 23 types of pneumococcal bacteria.
- Usually one dose of PPV is all that is needed.
- A second dose is recommended for people with kidney disease.
- It takes about two to three weeks for protection to develop after the shot for most healthy adults.

(Source: www.cdc.gov/flu/keyfacts.htm)

Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is a serious disease caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV). It can cause short and long term health problems including: tiredness, jaundice, diarrhea, joint pain, liver damage and liver cancer. HBV is spread through contact with the blood and body fluids of an infected person.

What I Should Know:

- Hepatitis B vaccine can prevent hepatitis B infection.
- People on dialysis are highly encouraged by the U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC) to receive the hepatitis B vaccine series.
- The vaccine is given in a series.
 - The series begins with the first vaccination.
 - The second is given one month later.
 - The third is given six months after the first vaccine.
- Sometimes, people on dialysis need a fourth vaccine to insure they are protected from HBV.
- Dialysis clinics are required to assess your level of protection and provide additional vaccination if necessary.
- If you are allergic to baker's yeast (the kind used for making bread) or have had a previous severe reaction to the vaccine, you should not take this vaccine.
- Getting hepatitis B vaccine is much safer than getting hepatitis B disease.
- Most people who get hepatitis B vaccine do not have any problems with it, however mild problems, such as soreness for a day or two where the shot was given, or a mild to moderate fever may occur.

(Source: <http://www.cdc.gov/nip/publications/VIS/vis-hep-b.pdf>)

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Tuberculosis (TB) Screening

TB is a disease caused by a bacterium called Mycobacterium tuberculosis and is spread through the air from one person to another. The bacteria usually attack the lungs, but TB bacteria can attack any part of the body such as the kidneys, spine, and brain. If not treated properly, TB disease can cause death. TB disease was once the leading cause of death in the United States.

What I Should Know:

- People on dialysis should be tested at least once for baseline tuberculin skin test results (TST).
- A small needle is used to put some testing material, called tuberculin, under the skin.
- You will be checked for a reaction in 2-3 days.
- If TB exposure is detected you should be re-tested.
- Chest x-rays may be used for individuals for whom the TST is not an option.

(Source: <http://www.cdc.gov/tb/>)

My Questions

Ask your Care Team:

- Am I current on my vaccines?
- Do I currently have protection?
- Do you have a copy of my vaccines on record?
- Are there vaccines I cannot have?
- How often should I be tested for TB?

