

# Diabetes & Immunizations

*Vaccines have a small, safe amount of the germ that causes an illness. In effect, this teaches your body to fight the germ if you get it again.*

*Always talk with your doctor about the shots you need, and their possible side effects.*

If you have diabetes, it's important to get your vaccinations, which are also called immunizations or vaccines.

Vaccines are given to prevent illnesses that can become very serious for people with diabetes. Some of these illnesses may even put you in the hospital.

## The main vaccines you need include:

### Influenza Vaccine, once each year in fall or winter

- ⇒ This vaccine prevents the flu.
- ⇒ Flu symptoms include sudden high fever, chills, body aches, sore throat, runny nose, dry cough, and headache.
- ⇒ People with diabetes who get the flu may become especially sick because the flu can lead to pneumonia or dangerously high blood sugar. The flu shot helps protect you from these complications.

### Pneumococcal Vaccine, usually one time (some people may need additional doses)

- ⇒ This vaccine prevents pneumococcal disease.
- ⇒ This disease can cause serious—even deadly—infections of the lungs, blood, and/or lining of the brain and spinal cord.
- ⇒ Having diabetes increases the risk for death from these illnesses, which the vaccine can help prevent.

### Hepatitis B, usually 3-4 doses

- ⇒ The hepatitis B virus infects the liver, can become chronic, and can cause death.
- ⇒ Up to age 60, people with diabetes have twice the risk of hepatitis B as those without diabetes. The vaccine can help protect you from these risks.