

PLAN FOR HEALTH

September
2023

Immunization and Medication Management

August was National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM). This annual observance highlights the important, life-saving role of vaccinations to the health and wellbeing of our society. October is Medication Education Month. 82% of American adults take at least one medication. Together, these national health observances aim to raise health awareness, treat, or prevent chronic health conditions, and keep Americans healthier.

THE IMPORTANCE OF IMMUNIZATIONS

Immunizations are important in protecting you and your children from harmful diseases and can prevent spread of diseases to others. Different types of vaccines work in different ways to offer protection and it typically takes a few weeks for immunity to build up. The CDC and FDA take many steps to ensure that vaccines are tested and safe for the public to use. Many vaccines are available to available to the public at no cost. You can get these vaccines at nearby participating pharmacies, your primary care physician or vaccination clinics in your community.

Vaccines may be recommended for you based on age, gender, health history, chronic health conditions and more. Here's some vaccinations to consider asking your doctor about:

- **Influenza (Flu):**
 - Recommended every year for everyone 6 months and older, but especially for pregnant women, older adults, and people with chronic health conditions.
- **Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Series:**
 - Recommended for adults ages 26 and younger. Adults ages 27-45 may be recommended for those at risk or per a doctor's advice.
- **Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR):**
 - Recommended that all children get two doses of the vaccine.
 - Adults born in 1957 or later, who did not have evidence of immunity against measles, should get at least one dose of the MMR vaccine.

- **Varicella (Chickenpox):**
 - Recommended that children under the age of 13 years old get 2 doses.
 - People 13 years old and older who have never gotten the chickenpox vaccine should get 2 doses.
- **Zoster (Shingles):**
 - Recommended for adults ages 50 and older. This vaccine may also be recommended for adults ages 19-49 with an immunocompromising condition.
- **Pertussis (Whooping Cough):**
 - Recommended for all young children, preteens, pregnant women, and adults who have never received it.
- Incorporate taking your medications with a daily routine like brushing your teeth or getting ready for bed. Before choosing a mealtime for your routine, check if your medication should be taken on a full or empty stomach.
- Keep a “medicine calendar” with your pill bottles and note each time you take a dose.
- Use a pill container. Some containers have sections for multiple doses at different times, such as morning, lunch, evening, and night.
- When using a pill container, refill it at the same time each week. For example, every Sunday morning after breakfast.
- Purchase timer caps for your pill bottles or a pill box with a timer function. You can set them to go off when your next dose is due.
- When travelling, be certain to bring enough of your medication, plus a few days extra, in case your return is delayed. If you’re flying, keep your medication in your carry-on bag to avoid lost luggage.

MEDICATION MANAGEMENT

Many people fail to take their medications as prescribed due to lack of understanding of the importance of it, lack of education, forgetfulness, or unpleasant side effects.

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), 20-30% of new prescriptions are never filled and medication is not taken as prescribed 50% of the time. For those with chronic diseases, after 6 months, many people take less medication than they are supposed to or stop all together. Taking medication can be tedious, but here are some tips that may help:

- Take your medication at the same time every day.

Immunizations help protect you and those around you from diseases for a healthier community. Medication management is important in treating and managing chronic conditions. If you have questions on either of these topics, ask your primary care physician at your next visit. You can also ask about your health plan’s preventive care schedule to see a full list of immunizations, exams and screenings that may be recommended for you.

Sharecare Featured Challenge:

Join the Quit Sugary Drinks Challenge this September. Track for 21 days that you reduced your sugary beverage intake to complete the challenge! Join the challenge by clicking **Achieve** → **Challenges** → **Quit Sugary Drinks Challenge** beginning on 8/25.



**Plan ahead...Join us next month for October’s health topic:
*Dental and Vision Prevention is Key***