

# DIABETES EDUCATION: VACCINATIONS

**Diabetes**, even if well-managed, can make it harder for your immune system to fight infections. If you have diabetes, and you get an infection, you may be at risk for more serious problems from it, compared to people who don't have diabetes. When you are sick, you also need to monitor your blood sugar more often.

**Vaccines** are one of the safest ways for you to protect your health, even if you are taking prescription medications to control your diabetes. **Immunizations** provide the best protection against diseases that can be prevented by having a vaccine.

## COMMON QUESTION: *WHAT VACCINES DO I NEED?*

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### Flu vaccine

- » Get a flu shot every year to protect against seasonal flu
- » The flu can raise your blood glucose to dangerously high levels

### Pneumococcal vaccines

- » Pneumococcal vaccines like Pneumovax 23 and Prevnar 13 protect against serious pneumococcal diseases ranging from ear and sinus infections to lung or bloodstream infections
- » People with diabetes are at an increased risk for death from lung infections like pneumonia, blood infections like bacteremia, and infection of the lining of the brain and spinal cord like meningitis

### Hepatitis B

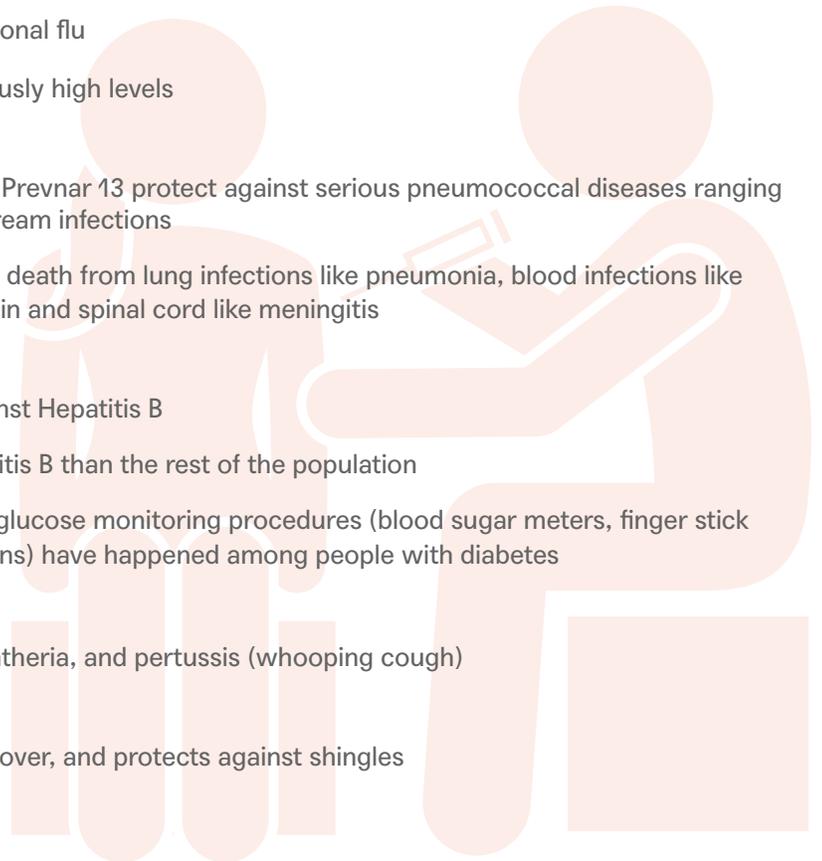
- » Hepatitis B is a vaccine series that protects against Hepatitis B
- » People with diabetes have higher rates of Hepatitis B than the rest of the population
- » Outbreaks of Hepatitis B associated with blood glucose monitoring procedures (blood sugar meters, finger stick devices, and other equipment such as insulin pens) have happened among people with diabetes

### Tdap vaccine

- » The Tdap vaccine protects against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (whooping cough)

### Zoster vaccine

- » The Zoster vaccine is for people 50 years old or over, and protects against shingles



## IMPORTANT NOTES:

Sometimes vaccines have side effects. They are usually mild and go away on their own. Some examples of mild side effects are redness, swelling, or tenderness where the shot is given, fever, loss of appetite, irritability, feeling tired, headache, and chills.

Severe side effects are very rare but if you have them, you should call 911. Some examples of severe side effects are hives, swelling of the face and throat, difficulty breathing, fast heartbeat, dizziness, weakness, vision changes, and ringing in the ears.