If you or someone you know experiences an adverse event (side effect) after being vaccinated, report the event to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS).

Over 8 in 10 events reported to VAERS are minor, such as mild fevers or redness at the injection site. The FDA reviews and investigates more serious events like hospitalizations and deaths.

Vaccine Adverse Event
Reporting System (VAERS)
www.vaers.hhs.gov/reportevent.html

Immunization Schedules
https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules

FOR MORE INFORMATION

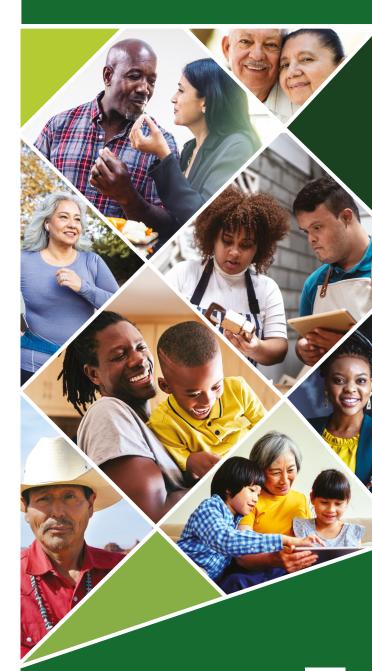🖥 www.fda.gov/healthequity

✉ healthequity@fda.hhs.gov

📞 1-888-INFO-FDA
(1-888-463-6332)

🐦 @FDAHealthEquity

FDA **U.S. FOOD & DRUG**
ADMINISTRATION

IMMUNIZATION: VACCINE BASICS

FDA Office of Minority Health and Health Equity

FDA

How do vaccines work?

When disease-causing viruses or bacteria (germs) invade the body, our immune systems are activated to attack them. Vaccines work by mimicking these germs so that if you are exposed to the real germ, your immune system is prepared to respond quickly. Immunization is the development of immunity to a virus or bacteria through vaccination.

Vaccines contain dead and weakened forms of germs or small pieces of germs. Others contain genetic instructions for immune cells to identify germs. Since vaccines do not contain germs in disease-causing forms, they **will not** give you the disease they are designed to prevent.

They are usually given to you as an injection (shot). Consult with your health care provider to find out when you can expect full immunity after vaccination. After this period, the vaccine may reduce your symptoms and prevent serious illness. Side effects of vaccination are usually mild, such as redness or soreness where the shot was given. Severe, long-lasting side effects can occur, but they are rare.

Vaccines are one of the safest ways to protect yourself against many infections.

Are vaccines safe?

Every vaccine is tested for quality and safety before it's approved by the FDA and recommended for use by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Vaccine manufacturers test each vaccine lot for identity, purity, strength, and sterility. The FDA reviews the results of the manufacturers' tests and may request the manufacturer to repeat the tests. In addition, the FDA inspects the factories where the vaccines are made.

In the event of a public health emergency, the FDA may issue an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) to facilitate the availability and the use of a vaccine. An EUA requires an FDA review of data on the quality and consistency of the vaccine product and a review of safety data collected from studies with people who volunteer to take the vaccine.

Which vaccines do you need?

There are many recommended FDA-approved vaccines for infants, children, and adults. Review the immunization schedules at **www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules** and talk to your health care provider to determine what vaccine(s) you should take. All adults should get a yearly flu shot. Other needed vaccines are based on your age, job, lifestyle, travel, or health conditions.