

ADULT IMMUNIZATION

Betty Golightly, B.Sc. Pharmacy, Foundation in Travel Medicine (Glasgow)

In light of the World Health Organization's recent declaration of a H1N1 (Swine Flu) pandemic, many people are looking to protect the health of their families through immunization. It is estimated that the vaccine for this virus will not be available to the general public until sometime in November 2009.

In the meantime, then, it stands to reason we should examine the immunization status of adults to other vaccine-preventable illnesses. One must recognize that routine immunizations, often last received in childhood, may no longer provide protection. The adult may not only be susceptible to illnesses themselves, they could even act as carriers of disease, such as whooping cough (pertussis), to their children or grandchildren.

General Adult Recommendations:

- Seasonal Influenza
- Tetanus/diphtheria (+ one-time pertussis) boosters
- Pneumococcal pneumonia-over 65 years old and other high risk groups
- Measles, mumps, rubella- if no history of measles/mumps or only have had 1 x MMR
- Chicken pox-if no history of disease

Special Considerations:

- Travellers
- Chronic illnesses- eg. diabetes mellitus or respiratory issues such as asthma
- Immunocompromised-through medications, transplants, or those without a spleen
- Pregnant or breastfeeding
- Health care workers
- Childcare workers (even those who work with teens/college-aged)
- Accommodations- nursing homes, lodges, chronic care facilities, those living with high risk individuals, or the homeless

New vaccines coming soon:

- Shingles
- H1N1

Immunization recommendations vary from person-to-person. Medical and vaccination history, as well as circumstances such as those listed under "Special Considerations" contribute in determining what vaccines may or may not be appropriate for each individual. The healthcare team at Preventous looks forward to having the opportunity to discuss your specific vaccination needs.