



The Capsule

Immunization Update: September 2025

The CDC (U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) continues to be our nation's source for public health protection, including immunization schedules based on the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) guidelines. CDC immunization schedules are separated by age groups. This edition of The Capsule will highlight some recommendations for the 65+ patient population.

COVID-19

- This virus continues to change and evolve, producing multiple variants.
- As of August 2025, the newest variant, XFG (nicknamed Stratus), has been seen in most states with increasing infection rates.
- COVID-19 vaccine products currently available for the 2024-2025 schedule continue to be effective against this new strain.
- Adults 65+ who have previously completed a COVID-19 vaccine series prior to the 2024-2025 available vaccine products are recommended to receive 2 doses, administered 6 months apart.

Influenza

- Flu season typically occurs during Fall and Winter seasons. Though influenza viruses spread year-round, peak activity typically occurs between December and February.
- The ACIP continues to recommend routine, annual vaccination against influenza as the best practice for prevention.
- People 65 years of age and older are recommended to receive either the high-dose inactivated flu vaccine, recombinant flu vaccine, or adjuvanted inactivated flu vaccine. If these are unavailable, any age-appropriate influenza vaccine may be used.

Respiratory Syncytial Virus

- RSV is a common respiratory virus known to cause mild, cold-like symptoms. However, older adults, or adults with certain risk factors may be more likely to have severe infection requiring hospitalization.
- RSV also spreads most commonly during Fall and Winter seasons, but with peak activity usually occurring during December and January.
- CDC current recommendations include adults age 75+ to receive one dose of RSV vaccine. Additionally, adults age 60-74 who are at risk of severe RSV disease should also receive one dose of the vaccine.

Pneumonia

- Pneumonia is an infection in the lungs that is known to be more severe in older patients or those with certain risk factors.
- As of October 2024, the ACIP recently expanded recommendations regarding Pneumonia vaccine practices to include adults over age 50. Current CDC schedules indicate adults 50 years or older who are unvaccinated should receive a dose of 1 of 3 available pneumococcal vaccines (PCV15, PCV 20 or PCV21).
- For adults 65+ who were previously vaccinated with PCV13 and PPSV23 but have not received any doses of PPSV23 over age 65, it is recommended to receive 1 dose of either PCV20 OR PCV21 at least 5 years after the last pneumococcal vaccine.
- Adults who have received a dose of PPSV23 after the age of 65 but who may be at increased risk of infection or complications may consider 1 dose of either PCV20 OR PCV21 at least 5 years after the last pneumococcal vaccine.

Shingles

- CDC currently recommends adults age 50+ should receive 2 doses of the recombinant zoster vaccine separated by 2 to 6 months.
- Patients should receive the 2-dose Recombinant Zoster Vaccine series regardless of receiving Zostavax® (live vaccine) in the past.

General Vaccine Guidelines

- Immunizations should be administered according to manufacturer specifications.
- It is possible to receive multiple vaccines at the same administration time. Best practice is to use separate administration sites (for example, one injection in each arm). If multiple vaccines must be given in the same location, separate the injections by at least 1 inch and document appropriately.
- Avoid giving vaccines when patients are actively sick with infection and/or are febrile.
- Common side effects with most vaccines can include injection site reactions, malaise, mild fever, headache, etc.
- Adverse reactions that develop after vaccine administration are recommended by the CDC and FDA to be reported via the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS).
- To see the complete immunization schedules, please visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/immunization-schedules/adult-age.html>



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