If you are 50+, protect yourself with vaccines for adults. Stay healthy.

Where do I get these vaccines?

They are available from your primary care doctor or clinic. Flu vaccine may also be available at drugstores and community clinics in the fall. If you are 65 years and older, influenza and pneumococcal vaccines are covered by Medicare Part B.

Do I need to keep a record of these vaccines?

Yes, keep a record of your immunizations with your other health documents or in your wallet.

Pneumococcal vaccine is given only once or twice in a lifetime. Your future doctors will need to know when you received this important immunization.

Tetanus boosters should not be given more than every ten years, except to care for a wound. This makes it important to keep a record of tetanus immunizations and boosters.

Make sure you get health information from a trusted source.

For additional up-to-date and reliable scientific information, talk with your doctor or clinic. Or contact these organizations:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Immunization Program and Hotline
1-800-232-2522 (English)
1-800-232-0233 (Spanish)
www.cdc.gov/nip

Immunization Action Coalition
www.immunize.org

National Coalition for Adult Immunization
www.nfid.org/ncai

National Network for Immunization Information
www.immunizationinfo.org

If you have travel plans:
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/travel

California Department of Health Services

Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor
State of California

Kimberly Belshé, Secretary
Health and Human Services Agency

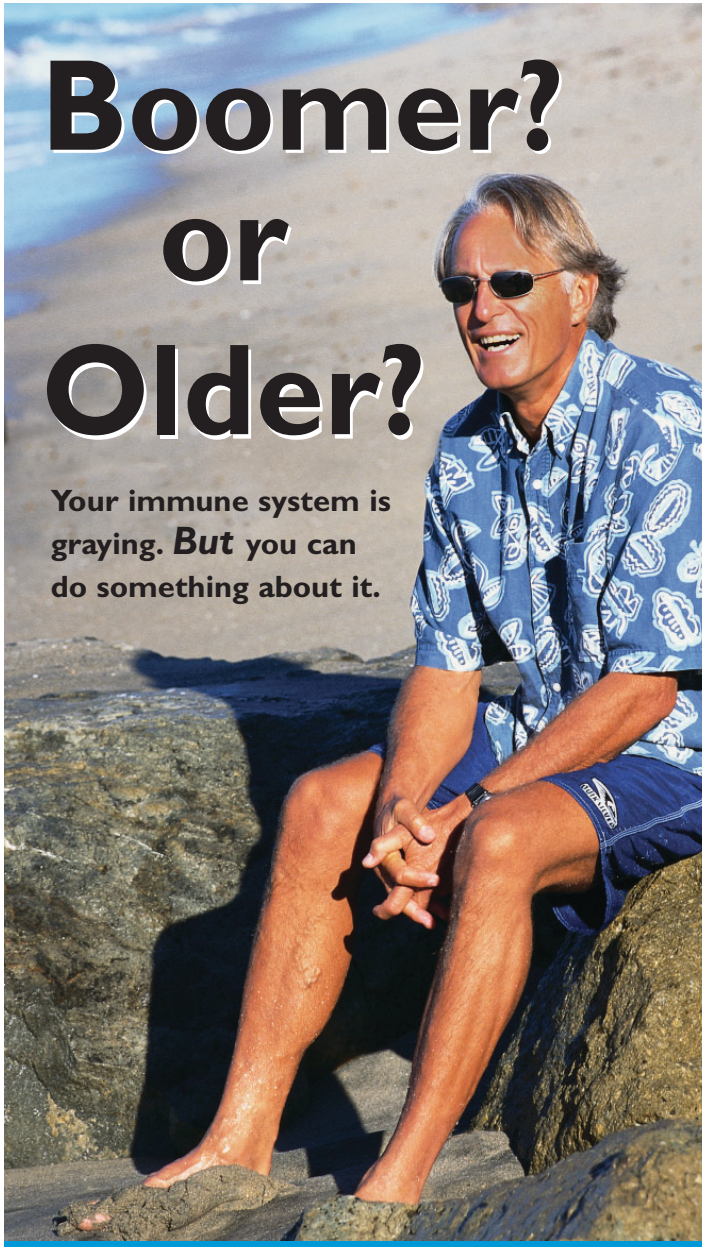
Sandra Shewry, Director
Department of Health Services

Immunization Branch
2151 Berkeley Way • Berkeley, CA 94704

Upon request, this document will be made available in Braille, large print, and audiocassette or computer disk. To obtain a copy in one of these alternate formats, please call the Materials Manager at (510)540-2065.

IMM-260 (11/02)

Boomer? or Older?



Your immune system is graying. *But* you can do something about it.

50+ Vaccines for Adults

50 or older?

As we age, our body's immune defense system slows down. Fortunately there are vaccines that can protect us against some diseases that can be serious health risks.

Here are the immunizations you need to prevent diseases dangerous to your future.

Influenza for 50+

Why do I need it?

Even if you are fit and in good health, if you are 50 years of age or older, you should get a flu shot every year in the fall to prevent the flu. After 50 you have a greater risk of serious complications and hospitalization from the flu. Flu vaccine is safe, effective, and cannot cause the flu.

But flu's never been a problem for me.

Even if you've gotten over the flu quickly in the past, you can't count on the rapid response of your immune system like you did when you were younger. After age 50, with the "graying" of your immune system, your body's ability to protect itself slows down. Complications of the flu can set in before you recover.

Who else needs a flu shot?

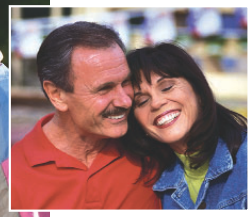
Flu shots are not just for those 50+. Anyone who has a chronic condition like diabetes, asthma, heart or lung problems needs a yearly flu shot. They also are recommended for all health care workers, for anyone with a weakened immune system, and for anyone who wants to reduce their chance of suffering from the flu.

Pneumonia for 65+

Why do I need it?

Pneumonia is a very serious, life-threatening disease for seniors. There are different types of pneumonia, but pneumococcal pneumonia is one of the most common. Pneumococcal pneumonia can follow a bad cold, the flu, or other type of chest infection. Sometimes antibiotic treatment fails to work. Even if antibiotics do work, you could suffer discomfort, anxiety, hospitalization, and a long period of recovery.

If you are 65 years of age or older and haven't had a pneumococcal pneumonia shot, you need one now. This shot is also recommended for adults who have chronic health conditions. You will only need one shot in your lifetime unless you got a pneumococcal pneumonia shot before you were 65 (and more than 5 years ago).



Tetanus for 50+

Do I need a Td booster?

If it has been over ten years since your last tetanus or Td shot, you need a booster now. Tetanus can strike after a simple scratch from a rose thorn, not just from a puncture wound from a rusty nail. The Td vaccine also protects you against diphtheria, another dangerous disease. Note: If you have a severe or dirty wound five or more years after your last tetanus dose, you likely will be given another tetanus shot during wound treatment.

How do I know if I've had the basic tetanus series?

If you were born after 1940 or served in the armed forces, you very likely did receive a 3-dose tetanus series. Some over age 70 may never have received this series; they will need three Td shots over an 8-12 month period, and then boosters every ten years.