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Vaccines Have Their Place at All Ages

The Public Health Agency of Canada Flu Watch for 2013/2014 reported more than 4,800 hospitalizations due to flu and almost 300 deaths across Canada. The influenza B strain that circulated in Canada this past flu season significantly impacted people over 65 and under five years of age. The scientists also waded through other statistics from this last influenza season and the results support previous studies: flu vaccines not only serve the public good of reducing the spread of flu (which is potentially serious in at-risk people), but, on an individual basis, getting the flu vaccine reduces the severity of the flu if it is contracted. Ninety percent of the hospital and ICU flu admissions studied were un-vaccinated. The flu vaccine isn't the only one that has significant impact on population and individual health!

Human papillomavirus (HPV) infection is usually not a problem on its own, but can lead to pre-cancerous changes in the cervix and other tissues. Thus, vaccination is aimed at preventing future cancers. Now, several years into a vaccination program, researchers in Australia are starting to see the results; they have found up to a 46 percent reduction in cervical abnormalities in the real world. It is believed their results would correspond with North American outcomes.

Adult Booster Vaccinations

Other than the odd travel vaccine, most adults don't think about vaccinations for themselves. The truth is, many childhood vaccinations "wear off" by adulthood and boosters are necessary to maintain protection. Diphtheria and tetanus vaccines should be boosted every 10 years and pertussis once in adulthood. Older adults should also consider getting pneumococcus and shingles vaccines while younger adults should look for HPV and meningococcus vaccines. Consider getting a measles/mumps vaccination if born after 1970.

Adult vaccination rates persist in being below recommended goals and place many at risk of preventable illness. The best rates exist for tetanus at about two thirds of adults vaccinated, however serious illnesses such as hepatitis A and hepatitis B remain low (at about 12 percent and 35 percent respectively). Pneumococcus can spread to serious illness to the heart and lungs in seniors, but 40 percent are still unvaccinated; shingles vaccination rates are low too, with only 20 percent of seniors protected.

Your pharmacist is trained and ready to provide vaccinations that can protect you from debilitating and deadly illnesses. Drop by to make arrangements to protect your future health.