Vaccinations and PH

People with pulmonary hypertension (and other chronic respiratory diseases) are at higher risk of serious illness and complications from infectious diseases and benefit from keeping vaccinations up to date. A momentarily sore arm can prevent a hospital visit!

Some vaccines may be covered by your provincial health care plan or, if you have it, private insurance.

Annual vaccines

Canada recommends that people with lung diseases receive **influenza** and **COVID-19 vaccines** annually, or even more often. Provinces tend to make these available each autumn.

Family members, friends, caregivers, and others who provide essential services to people with pulmonary hypertension should also keep their flu and COVID vaccines up to date.

Keep routine immunizations current

Check your vaccination history. Different provinces have different schedules and coverage, but is it time to take care of any routine immunizations?

For example:

- A **diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis** (Tdap) vaccine is generally needed once in adulthood and during each pregnancy, and a **tetanus and diphtheria** (Td) booster is generally needed every ten years.
- People born between 1970 and 1990 often received only one dose of the **measles, mumps, and rubella** (MMR) vaccine in childhood. It is now often recommended that they receive an MMR booster.

Vaccines are important for children with pulmonary hypertension as well. Infants and children with pulmonary hypertension can follow their province's standard immunization schedule unless directed by their pulmonary hypertension medical team.

Have your health care team check for any gaps to see if you (or your child) are due for any routine immunizations.

What other vaccines might help?

Eligibility (and insurance coverage) criteria vary, but other vaccines to discuss with your health care team include:

- **Respiratory syncytial virus** (RSV). RSV is usually a mild, cold-like disease, but it can lead to severe complications, especially in people with lung disorders.
- **Pneumococcus**. Pneumococcal vaccines offer extra protection against some forms of pneumonia. The current pneumococcal vaccine is given even if you have received older versions of the vaccine.
- **Shingles**. Of course, shingles isn't a lung disease, but it is unpleasant!

More information

- CANImmunize has links to all the provincial vaccination schedules as well as vaccine fact sheets and other information.
- The Public Health Agency of Canada has a poster on vaccine safety in Canada, describing all stages from vaccine development to ongoing monitoring, and many other immunization and vaccine awareness materials.
- Myvaccines.ca lets you search vaccination clinics near you.
- Nervous about needles? The Comfort, Ask, Relax, Distract system can make your vaccination experience more positive.
- Vaccinations and influenza information sheet
- Vaccinations and pneumococcal disease information sheet

LUNG VACCINATION WORKING GROUP

PHA Canada is proud to be a member of the Lung Vaccination Working Group, which works to improve vaccination uptake among people living with chronic respiratory conditions through public awareness, education, advocacy and policy change.