



# Vaccines for People on Dialysis

When you are on dialysis, you are more likely to get an infection. Your dialysis center has vaccines that can help keep you from getting flu, pneumonia, and hepatitis B. These diseases can be deadly. Taking the vaccines could keep you alive.

## Influenza (Flu)

The flu is a virus that spreads when people cough or sneeze. It can cause:

- High fever and headache
- Muscle aches
- Cough, sore throat, stuffy nose
- Fatigue
- Ear or sinus infection
- Pneumonia (lung infection)

## Flu Risks

The flu can make diabetes, heart failure, or asthma worse. Each year, 36,000 people in America die from the flu.

## About the Vaccine (Flu Shot)

- A flu shot will help protect you for the whole flu season (which can last from October through May).
- In about 2 weeks, the vaccine will start to help your body fight the flu.
- Get a flu shot early in the flu season to give it time to work.
- **Each year the flu virus changes. So, you need a new flu shot every year—even if you had the flu last year.**
- The nasal spray flu-vaccine is not a safe choice for you or those who live with you.

## Flu Shot Cautions

- A flu shot may make your arm sore, red, or swollen.
- A flu shot can cause a low-grade fever or muscle aches for 1-2 days.
- Rarely, a flu shot can cause an allergic reaction.
- Do not get a flu shot if you have a fever, wait until your fever is gone to get your shot.
- **Do NOT get a flu shot if you are allergic to eggs or if you had a bad reaction to a flu shot in the past.**

## Pneumonia

Pneumonia is a lung infection. It can be caused by a virus, but the most common cause is a bacteria. Pneumonia can cause:

- High fever
- Cough, shortness of breath
- Bacteremia (bacteria in the blood)
- Meningitis (brain cover infection)

## Pneumonia Risks

Pneumonia affects 1 out of 100 people each year. Pneumonia and the problems it can cause kill many people each year. The risk of death is higher in people on dialysis.

## About the Pneumonia Vaccine

- The pneumococcal vaccine helps protect you from 23 types of infection. It works 60-70% of the time.
- In about 2-3 weeks, the vaccine will start helping your body fight against the pneumonia bacteria.



## Pneumonia Vaccine Cautions

- About half of all people who get the shot have no side effects.
- Some people may have a red or sore arm where the shot is given.
- Less than 1 person in 100 may have a fever and chills for 1-2 days.
- Less than 1 person in 10,000 may be allergic to the PPV.
- **After the shot, call your doctor right away if you feel dizzy or weak, it is hard to breathe, or you start to itch.**
- As a person on dialysis, you will need another shot 5 years after your first one.



## Hepatitis B (HBV)

Hepatitis B is a serious liver infection caused by a virus. **Since HBV is spread through contact with blood or body fluids, dialysis patients are at high risk.** In the short term, HBV can cause:

- Yellow skin or eyes
- Fatigue
- Stomach upset and loss of appetite
- Pain in muscles, joints, and stomach

### TO LEARN MORE:

Talk to your doctor or nurse, or call the Centers for Disease Control at (800) 232-4636

## Hepatitis B Risks

Hepatitis B can become a chronic (long-term) infection. It can lead to liver damage, liver cancer, and death. The Hepatitis B vaccine can help protect you against chronic HBV infection.

## About the Hepatitis B Vaccine

- Your doctor will test your blood to see if you need this vaccine.
- If you had Hepatitis B—and you may not know—you don't need the vaccine.
- A series of 3 or 4 Hepatitis B shots is needed to protect you. You may need extra doses. Some people do not respond to the vaccine at all.

## Hepatitis B Vaccine Cautions

- The Hepatitis B vaccine is very safe. About 1 person in 4 has mild soreness in the arm where the shot was given. About 1 in 15 has a mild fever.
- Fewer than 1 in 1.1 million people are allergic to the vaccine. **If you are allergic to yeast or any other part of the vaccine, do not get the vaccine. After the shot, if you feel dizzy, weak, it is hard to breathe, or you start to itch, call your doctor right away.**

### NOTE:

Vaccines may be less effective in people on dialysis, but they are still your best chance to avoid deadly illness.