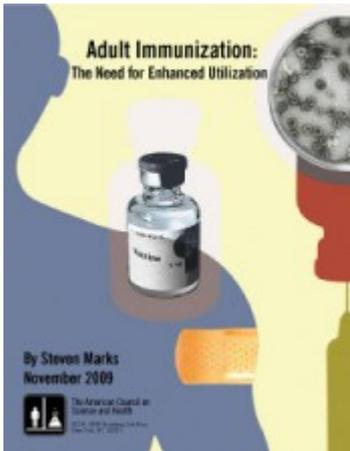


Adult Vaccines: Raising Awareness, Improving Access

By ACSH Staff — November 11, 2009



[1]

The current "swine flu" problem is a reminder that the U.S. pays too little attention to the important broader issue of [Adult Immunization](#) [2] and that too few adults are getting the shots they need, even though most kids are getting theirs. Scientists associated with the American Council on Science and Health (ACSH) have researched and written a thorough, comprehensive report on this largely-neglected topic, available in three formats:

Although vaccination is acknowledged to be one of the most cost-effective public health strategies available to prevent many communicable viral and bacterial infections, large numbers of Americans above the age of 18 remain vulnerable to vaccine-preventable diseases (VPDs). Over 90% of children receive most recommended vaccines, but generally low rates of coverage are the norm for adults.

For example, only 10% of women in the target population of 18 to 26 years have been vaccinated against human papilloma virus (HPV), a major cause of cervical cancer. The rate is not much higher for tetanus and diphtheria shots; only 44% of American adults have been vaccinated. Even for influenza, the illness for which the value of immunization is best recognized by the public, and which annually takes the lives of over 30,000 Americans, coverage is erratic.

Despite the ready availability of clinically proven interventions to prevent a host of potentially life-threatening illnesses, utilization rates by adults continue to be disappointing -- whereas children's vaccination regimens are well entrenched in routine pediatric care and well covered by government and private insurance.

Adults may wrongly perceive that VPDs are a matter for infants and children and that the health risks from common transmissible viral and bacterial infections are high only for children. The

scientific evidence, however, suggests otherwise.

The American Council on Science and Health hopes these publications will greatly enhance awareness of [Adult Immunization](#) ^[2] at a pivotal time.

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[1] http://www.acsh.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/20091111_ai_8.5x11.jpg

[2] <http://www.acsh.org/publications/adult-immunization>