



Vaccination information
for Natives by Natives

Vaccines for People with Diabetes



Vaccines are especially important for people with diabetes (both type 1 and type 2).

Even when its well-managed, diabetes weakens our immune system. This makes it harder to fight off infections. Thankfully, vaccines can help protect us, so we can stay healthy.

This handout is about the importance of vaccines for people with diabetes. It also highlights key vaccines people with diabetes should consider and why.

Key Vaccines to Consider

| | Importance | When to Get Vaccine |
|------------------------|--|--|
| Influenza (Flu) | Keeps you safe from flu and COVID-19 - infections that affect our nose, throat, and breathing passages. These can be more severe for people with diabetes. | Every year starting in early Fall through Spring. |
| COVID-19 | | |
| Pneumonia | Protects you from a pneumonia – a serious infection caused by a bacteria or virus in the lungs. | Younger than 65: At least one dose is recommended. 65 or older: Check with your health provider. |
| Hepatitis B | Defends against hepatitis B - an infection that can cause liver disease. | 19-59 years old: Get series if didn't receive as a child. 60 or older: Check with your health provider. |
| Shingles | Keeps you safe from shingles – which can cause a painful blistering rash on one side of the body. Shingles is caused by the same virus that causes chicken pox. | Starting at age 50 and older. If you haven't had chicken pox yet, also consider getting vaccinated against chicken pox. |
| Tdap Booster | Protects against infections that can damage your nerves and organs, like your heart and lungs. | Every 10 years. |



“ Even if your diabetes is managed well, you are still more likely to get seriously ill from certain infections. The reason for this is that diabetes lowers the number of cells in our bodies that can fight off infections. Also, certain illnesses, like flu, can raise your blood sugar to dangerous levels. Vaccines protect us from getting ill. They also make it less likely that we get seriously ill, or die, if we happen to get sick. ”

– Dr. Antontrey Begaye, MD, Navajo Nation

Vaccine Side Effects

Vaccines are safe for people with diabetes, and they don't interfere with prescription medicines used to treat diabetes. However, you may experience vaccine side effects.

The most common vaccine side effects include:



Soreness, redness, or swelling where you got the shot



Headache



Tiredness



Fever and nausea



Muscle aches

Most side effects are mild and go away within a few days. Mild side effects are a good sign that your body is preparing to protect you. Side effects are not a sign of illness.

Where to Get Vaccinated

To get vaccinated contact your local Tribal clinic, IHS facility, or visit a local pharmacy or clinic.

VacciNative

This handout was developed by VacciNative – a project dedicated to creating accurate vaccine information for Native people by Native people. We do this by gathering info from trusted Elders, Native health professionals, and other experts.

All of our materials are reviewed by the VacciNative Alliance, a collaboration of staff from Tribal Epidemiology Centers across the nation.

Additional Information

For additional information, check out www.IndianCountryECHO.org/VacciNative. For questions, contact us at VacciNative@npaihb.org.

You may need other vaccines

You may need other vaccines based on your health status and other factors. Talk with your health provider to learn which vaccines are best for you.



“ To make sure you are up to date on your vaccines, during your next medical appointment, ask your provider ‘What vaccines do I need now and in the future?’ Additionally, ask your provider if you can get multiple shots at once to cut down on visits to the clinic. ”

– Dr. Geniel Harrison, MD, Chief Medical Officer, Portland Area I.H.S. and member of the Confederated Tribes of the Goshute Reservation

