

## Transcript

You can't see them, but there are germs all around us. Some travel through the air and invade our bodies when we breathe. Some live on surfaces and are passed from person to person through contact. And others are spread through bodily fluids or sexual contact.

But germs are dangerous. They are actually tiny viruses and bacteria that can lead to infection. Infections can cause very serious health problems, some even life-threatening.

As a baby and throughout childhood, your body built a system that could fight these infections, called your immune system. And to help your immune system, when you were little, you got vaccines.

A vaccine contains a weakened or dead part of a germ. When you get a vaccine, the germ enters your body but it doesn't make you sick. Instead, your body makes antibodies. Antibodies fight against the germ to protect you.

After getting a vaccine, when your body comes in contact with those germs again, it already has the ability to fight them and can prevent the infection.

For years, your healthy immune system, together with your childhood vaccinations, can fight the germs and keep you healthy. But over time, as you age, your immune system gets weaker and many of the vaccines you got as a child get weaker too and you are no longer fully protected.

The bad news is, the germs that cause serious diseases are still out there, all around you. The good news is, you can help your body fight them again. And the best way to do this is to stay up to date with your vaccines. This may mean you need to get certain vaccinations again or it may mean you need a booster vaccine. A booster amount of vaccine exposes your body to the germ again. Your body builds the antibodies back up to a level that can prevent infection. Talk to your healthcare provider about what vaccines you may need and when.

Some adults are at a higher risk of certain infections because of their jobs, travel or lifestyles. And if you have a weakened immune system due to chronic illnesses like diabetes, heart disease, asthma, COPD as well as other common conditions, your risk of getting serious health complications from diseases that can be prevented through vaccines increases.

Not only are you at an increased risk of serious illness if you are not up to date on your vaccines, you are putting the people around you at risk too. New mothers and fathers need to be especially careful around their children. Teachers, daycare workers and childcare providers must be up to date on all vaccinations to protect the children around them. And healthcare workers should be up to date so they do not put their patients at risk.

Getting vaccinated is easy and can protect yourself and your loved ones from many serious diseases. Talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist about getting up to date on your vaccinations today. And encourage your family and friends to get vaccinated as well. Together you can prevent getting and spreading serious diseases, making your home and your community a safer place to live.