

# Immunizations & You

## Considerations for Adults with Mental Illness

### Why immunizations?



**Immunizations** are a way of preventing people from getting some diseases. This is done by making the person's body come into contact with a bit of the disease so that the body learns how to fight it. Typically, this is done using a **vaccine** given in the form of a shot.

According to the CDC:

**45,000**

people die in the U.S. each year from vaccine-preventable diseases.

This is nearly **3 times** the rate of deaths attributed to HIV in the U.S.

Factors that may increase health risks among people with mental illness are similar to factors that **support** getting vaccinated, such as smoking and substance use.

As a result, vaccines can be important to their health care.

### Who is at **High Risk**?



Adults ages 18-64 with medical conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, & lung disease.

Injection or non-injection drug users



The Homeless

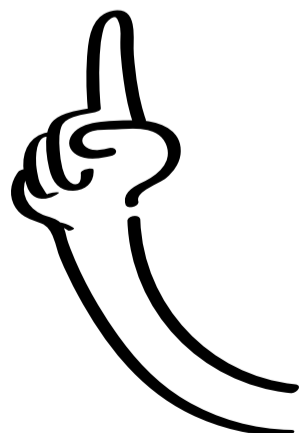


Health care workers at risk for exposure



### IMPORTANT POINT!

People who have chronic, severe mental illness are more vulnerable to communicable diseases than the general population and have difficulty keeping up to date with immunizations that can protect them from these diseases. Mental health professionals are often people's only contact with the health care system.



# Access Risk Factors: ARM SHOT

- **A**ge
- **R**isk of exposure
- **M**edical Conditions
- **S**ubstance use history
- **H**IV status or other immunocompromised states
- **O**ccupancy, or living arrangements
- **T**obacco use

The simple ARM SHOT tool is adapted from the CDC (Table 1) for mental health professionals to assist them in determining what vaccines may be a good health care choice for their clients.

**Table 1**  
**ARM SHOT explained**

<b>Age</b> is an important determinant for certain vaccinations. For example, human papillomavirus is an important consideration for patients age <26 and pneumococcal vaccines (PCV13 and PPSV23) for patients age ≥65
<b>Risk of exposure</b> to pathogens via blood and bodily fluids among susceptible individuals, such as those who share needles, travel to endemic areas, work as health care professionals, and/or have increased sexual activity, including men who have sex with men, requires consideration of certain vaccines
<b>Medical conditions</b> , such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes, hepatitis, asplenia, end-stage renal disease, cardiac disease, and pregnancy, require special attention, according to CDC immunization algorithms
<b>Substance use</b> , particularly alcohol as well as other recreational or illicit substances, places individuals at greater risk for vaccine-preventable diseases
<b>HIV (or other immunocompromised states)</b> makes live vaccines, such as the varicella-zoster virus (shingles) vaccine, contraindicated
<b>Occupancy</b> in a residential facility or any other communal living situation (including correctional facilities) is an important consideration that requires special attention for immunization
<b>Tobacco use</b> exacerbates cardiovascular and pulmonary disease and is an important variable in the vaccination of patients

