

Immunization Awareness Month: Stay Up to Date, Stay Protected



Vaccine Safety and Awareness

Vaccines are one of the most effective tools we have to build immunity against viruses, bacteria and germs both for ourselves and our community. Understanding how they work and why they're safe empowers you to make informed decisions about your health.

The Science Behind Safety

Vaccines undergo complex testing before they are approved for use, typically spanning 10-15 years of research and clinical trials. Every vaccine approved for use has been evaluated by independent scientists and medical professionals who verify both its safety and effectiveness. Even after they are approved, there are ongoing monitoring systems that track vaccine performance and identify any rare side effects.

What You Should Know

- **Vaccines strengthen immunity** by training your body to recognize and fight specific diseases before you're exposed to them.
- **Mild side effects** like soreness at the injection site or low-grade fever are normal signs your immune system is responding.
- **Serious side effects are extremely rare**, occurring in less than one in a million doses for most vaccines.
- **Community immunity protects vulnerable populations** who cannot receive vaccines due to age or medical conditions.

Vaccinations are a cornerstone of long-term health and wellness. Regular preventive care, including staying current with recommended vaccines, helps establish the strong foundation your body needs to stay healthy.

Take Action

- Review your vaccine records with your healthcare provider.
- Ask questions about vaccines appropriate for your age and health status.
- Stay informed through trusted sources like the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) or your doctor.

Prevention is the best medicine.
Stay informed about vaccines and stay protected.



Source: [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#)

Preventive Care and Why It Matters

When it comes to your health, waiting to take care of yourself until you get sick isn't a strategy; it's a risk. Preventive care means taking care of yourself *before* you have a problem. It's like checking your bike before you ride it instead of waiting for something to break. When you proactively take care of yourself and your health, you can catch problems early when they're easier to fix.

Studies show that preventive care helps you stay healthier, live longer and save money on healthcare. Some health issues like heart disease, diabetes and cancer can grow inside your body for years without showing any symptoms. Regular check-ups help you find these problems early before they get serious. The earlier you find a problem, the easier it is to treat. Preventive care can include many different services:

- **Regular Check-Ups and Tests**
 - Blood pressure checks
 - Cholesterol and blood sugar tests
 - Cancer screenings
 - Eye and hearing tests
 - Bone strength tests
- **Shots and Vaccines**
 - Vaccines for kids and adults
 - Flu shots
 - Tetanus shots
 - Travel vaccines
- **Preventive Medicines**
 - Medications to lower cholesterol or blood pressure
 - Vitamins (e.g. prenatal vitamins to support maternal health)
- **Health Counseling**
 - Healthy eating tips
 - Help to quit smoking
 - Mental health support
 - Stress management help

Everyone needs different types of preventive care. Your age, gender, family health history and lifestyle all play a role in determining the kinds of preventive care that may be beneficial to you and your health. Your doctor can help you figure out which check-ups and tests you need and how often you should get them.

What You Can Do

- Schedule a check-up with your doctor once a year.
- Make sure your vaccines are up-to-date.
- Ask your doctor which health screenings you need.
- Tell your doctor about health problems that run in your family.
- Make your health a priority.

Don't Let Cost Stop You

Most health insurance plans pay for preventive care visits and screenings at no cost to you. This includes yearly wellness visits, many health tests and recommended vaccines. Check out your insurance plan to find more information!

Source: [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#)

Chili-rubbed Flank Steak Salad



This colorful southwest-inspired salad features plenty of vegetables and delicious steak to make for a perfect late-summer salad.

Makes 4 servings.

Ingredients:

Steak & Rub

- 1 pound flank steak, trimmed
- 2 tablespoons neutral oil, such as canola or avocado
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 1 teaspoon unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground pepper
- ¼ teaspoon salt

Salad Dressing

- ¼ cup finely chopped cilantro
- ¼ cup low-fat plain Greek yogurt
- 2 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons lime juice
- 1 teaspoon lime zest
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon honey
- ⅛ tsp salt

Salad

- 6 cups chopped romaine lettuce
- 1 cup frozen corn kernels, thawed
- 1 (15 ounce) can low-sodium black beans, rinsed
- 1 large orange or yellow bell pepper, chopped
- ½ cup medium red onion, chopped
- ¼ cup crumbled feta cheese
- ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 tablespoons pepitas

Directions:

1. To prepare steak & rub: Place steak in a large glass dish. Combine oil, garlic, chili powder, cocoa, cumin, cinnamon, pepper and ¼ teaspoon salt in a small bowl. Rub the mixture on both sides of the steak. Cover and refrigerate for 1½ to 2 hours.
2. Meanwhile, prepare dressing: Whisk cilantro, yogurt, mayonnaise, lime zest, lime juice, garlic, honey and salt in a separate small bowl.
3. To cook steak: Preheat grill to medium-high. Grill the steak to desired doneness, 4 to 5 minutes per side for medium-rare (130-135°F on an instant-read thermometer). Transfer to a clean cutting board and let rest for 4 to 5 minutes before slicing.
4. To prepare salad: Combine lettuce, corn, beans, bell pepper and onion in a large bowl. Add the dressing and toss to coat.
5. Slice the steak thinly across the grain. Divide the salad among 4 plates, top with the steak, and sprinkle with feta, cilantro and pepitas, if using.

NUTRITION INFORMATION

Calories per serving	467
Sodium	538mg
Fat	22g
Saturated Fat	5g
Carbohydrates	32g
Protein	36g
Total Sugars	7g
Fiber	9g

Source: [EatingWell](#)

AUGUST 2026

INTERNATIONAL OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY

AUGUST 31

Drug overdose deaths are rising dramatically in the U.S. This day highlights the need for immediate and effective policies and support systems.

Learn more: dea.gov/ioad

NATIONAL IMMUNIZATION AWARENESS MONTH

Getting vaccinated is an effective way to protect yourself and those around you. People of all ages are encouraged to stay up to date on their recommended immunizations to help prevent the spread of serious illness.

Learn more: cdc.gov/vaccines



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Stay Up to Date, Stay Protected



Vaccinations are an important defense system for your body as they help protect your health against germs, viruses and bacteria. Vaccinations teach your body how to recognize and stop diseases before they make you sick, making them an important part of preventive healthcare and your overall wellbeing.

Viruses and bacteria constantly evolve to find new ways to take over your immune system. Staying up-to-date with your vaccinations ensures your body can recognize and fight these pathogens before they make you sick.

Your choices affect the people around you. Getting vaccinated helps protect you, your family and your coworkers by reducing the spread of illness and supporting a safer, healthier environment for everyone in your life. Even skipping a booster or seasonal vaccine can make you a carrier of illnesses that may not affect you but can be passed on to others. Below are some commonly recommended vaccinations across age groups — be sure to speak with your doctor about which vaccines are recommended for you.

HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT A SPECIFIC VACCINE?

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has a database of frequently asked questions, safety information and additional resources for common vaccinations. Visit www.cdc.gov/vaccine-safety/vaccines to learn more about a specific vaccine.

Age Group	Common Vaccinations
Children	Polio, Measles, Mumps, Chickenpox
Teens	HPV and Meningitis
Adults	Annual Flu and Tetanus boosters
Seniors	Shingles and Pneumonia

Sources:
American Medical Association (AMA)