Workers' Comp

Ask The Pharmacist: Adult Vaccination and Its Role in Workplace Health

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What role does adult vaccination play in workers' compensation claims?

While often overlooked, adult immunization status can significantly influence recovery timelines, risk of complications and workplace absence—factors that directly affect claim outcomes and return-to-work planning. Staying current with recommended adult vaccinations represents an essential aspect of preventive health care with important implications for overall well-being and workplace health.

Adult Vaccines That Protect Health and Preserve Productivity

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides comprehensive guidelines for adult immunizations that help prevent serious illnesses that could lead to extended absences from work and potential workers' compensation claims if contracted through occupational exposure. These vaccines serve not only personal health but also occupational risk mitigation—especially for health care, public-facing or physically demanding roles.

Influenza (Flu) Vaccine

The annual influenza vaccine, recommended for all adults each fall, helps prevent a disease that—without vaccination—can lead to significant workplace absences, with medically treated cases resulting in nearly three missed workdays and up to a 69% drop in productivity during recovery.

Tdap and Td (Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis)

For tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis protection, adults should receive one Tdap vaccine if they haven't had one since childhood, followed by either a Td or Tdap booster every ten years to maintain immunity against these serious conditions, particularly important for jobs involving animal exposure, puncture risks or frequent contact with soil or rusted metal.

Shingles (Recombinant Zoster Vaccine)

Adults aged 50 and older should receive the recombinant zoster vaccine, administered as a two-dose series, 2-6 months apart, to prevent shingles and its potentially debilitating complications.

Pneumococcal Vaccine

Pneumococcal vaccination becomes increasingly important with age, with specific recommendations for adults 65 and older to protect against pneumonia and related serious infections.

These immunizations help prevent illnesses that could otherwise lead to extended recovery periods and time away from work.

Additional Vaccines Based on Risk and Age

Other important vaccines in the adult schedule include hepatitis B, now universally recommended for adults aged 19-59, and the MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine for adults born after 1957 without evidence of immunity. COVID-19 vaccination and recommended boosters have also become an essential part of the adult immunization schedule, helping protect against severe disease and potential long-term complications that could affect work capacity.

These vaccinations become especially important in occupational exposure settings—such as health care or service roles—where disease transmission risk is elevated.

Vaccination Gaps and Claim Impact

Maintaining up-to-date immunization status is a straightforward, effective way to prevent serious illnesses especially those acquired through occupational exposure that could potentially lead to workers' compensation claims. Yet many adults have gaps in their records or may need additional vaccines based on individual risk factors. When vaccination status—particularly for respiratory or communicable illnesses—is overlooked, it can contribute to avoidable delays, increased medical costs and longer return-to-work timelines.

This information is meant to serve as a general overview, and any specific questions should be fully reviewed with a health care professional such as the prescribing doctor or dispensing pharmacist.

Do you have a workers’ compensation or auto-related pharmacy question? Send us an email at AskThePharmacist@enlyte.com.

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