

# It's All About Staying Healthy!

## Getting Healthy And Staying Healthy

A Guide to Vaccines and Infection Control for ESRD Beneficiaries



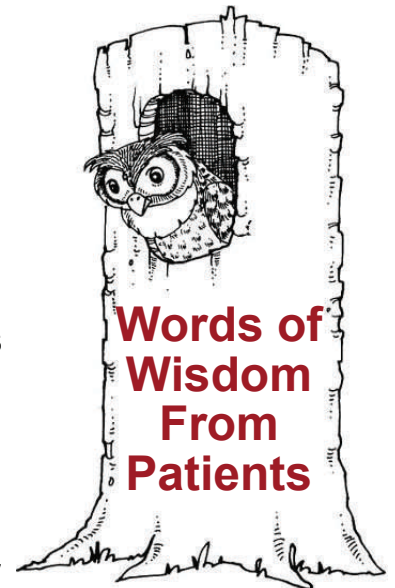
### Safe & Timely Immunizations Coalition

Southeastern Kidney Council has a coalition made up of patients, providers, and professionals called the Safe & Timely Immunizations Coalition. Their focus is on increasing immunization and infection control education therefore, increasing the number of patients that are immunized and remain healthy!

Based on a study performed in 2007 by this coalition, the number one reason that people with End Stage Renal Disease do not get immunized is due to lack of understanding the immunization process. This newsletter was developed by this coalition to help you understand the immunization process and stay informed!

## Staying Immunized, Staying Healthy

Immunizations; vaccinations; shots, any way that you choose to refer to them, are an essential part of maintaining the best health possible for any person; however, they are critically important for patients suffering from chronic illnesses such as End Stage Renal Disease. Kidney disease patients and transplant recipients are more susceptible to contracting illnesses than an ordinarily healthy person is, due to their compromised and immunosuppressed systems respectively. Immunizations are one thing that a dialysis patient or a kidney transplant recipient can do for themselves to hopefully fight off any oncoming sicknesses or rejection episodes before they have a good chance at even starting.










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# Wise Up to the Facts: It is the Key to a Healthier YOU!



## Influenza (Flu) Facts





-  Influenza (the flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses.
-  Each year over 36,000 people in the United States die because of the flu—most are 65 or older.
-  The flu shot **CANNOT** cause the flu.
-  Studies have show that the flu shot is up to 90% effective.
-  The best time to get vaccinated is October or November.  
 But you can get vaccinated in December or LATER.
-  As a dialysis patient you have a greater change of developing serious problems from the flu and are considered a priority group for the vaccine.

## Pneumonia Facts






-  Pneumococcal disease is caused by bacteria. It can lead to serious infections of the lungs, blood and the covering of the brain.
-  About one out of every 20 people who get pneumonia die from it.
-  The pneumonia shot can be given ANY time of year.
-  The pneumococcal vaccine protects against 23 types of pneumococcal bacteria.
-  Pneumococcal disease kills more people in the United States than all other vaccine-preventable diseases combined.

## Wise Up to the Facts: Continued

### Hepatitis B Facts

-  Hemodialysis patients are at an increased risk of Hepatitis B viral infection.
-  The Hepatitis B vaccine is safe, effective and your best protection against the virus.
-  The Hepatitis B vaccine is usually given in a series of 3 injections over a six month period.
-  Hepatitis B vaccines can prevent hepatitis B and also protects against a form of liver cancer.

### H1N1 Facts

-  The H1N1 virus is different from the traditional flu virus.
-  Dialysis patients **SHOULD NOT** take the nasal spray vaccine because it is a Live Attenuated Influenza Virus (LAIV).
-  Dialysis patients **SHOULD** take the H1N1 vaccine as you are in the High Risk Category based on your renal failure.
-  You can not catch H1N1 from pork or pork products.
-  H1N1 spreads from person to person through respiratory droplets (coughing, sneezing, etc.).

If you have questions about any of these vaccines, please consult your healthcare provider or call the Network office at 1-800-524-7139! We are here to help you understand the facts about all of your ESRD CARE!



Vaccinations which are considered standard necessities for kidney dialysis patients are: Influenza (flu), Pneumococcal (pneumonia), and Hepatitis B. Many people come down with the seasonal flu every year and although there are many cases where they become extremely ill or even die, the flu is something that most healthy humans can fight with time, medicine, and rest. Pneumonia is serious for anyone and very threatening to someone already weak. Also, there are several professions where someone is required to come in close contact with another person's contaminated blood and/or body products. The Pneumonia and Hepatitis B shots help prevent kidney dialysis and transplant patients from becoming so extremely ill from these diseases which can be very dangerous and life-threatening for this group of individuals especially. Anyone who is compromised will have a much more difficult time being able to recover and recover without too many adverse effects than a normal, healthy person will be able to overcome.

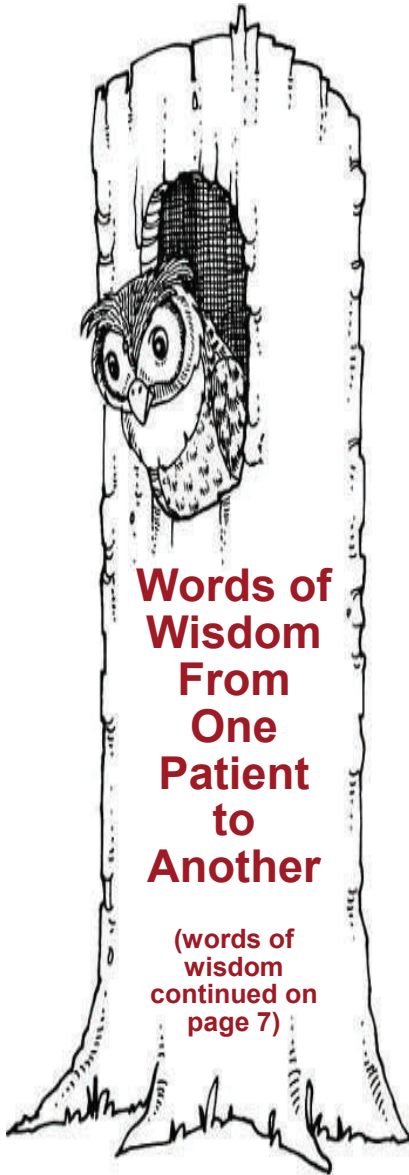
We, as kidney patients and transplant recipients, go to our nephrologists for our care because we need their advice, their expertise, and their knowledge to help keep us alive and living a happy, long, and productive life. End Stage Renal Disease is something that will kill you if not treated. Our doctors at these visits request, enforce, and pretty much require that we receive these vaccinations so if we are going to them because of their expertise, why would we not as patients take their advice and become immunized? Your doctor is there to help you. If you do not feel like your doctor has sufficiently explained to you the need for immunizations, what they are, and why they are so important to your particular situation; then ask! You as a patient are your own best advocate! If you still do not feel comfortable, do not understand, or experience any type of behaviors while in the office that do not convince you or make you feel comfortable about the subject-change doctors!

Be sure that you were also vaccinated as a child as you should be. If you never received the MMR (measles, mumps, rubella), or chicken pox shots, ask your doctor if it would be a good idea for you to receive them now.

I am a former hemodialysis, peritoneal dialysis and three time kidney transplant recipient. I take my doctor's advice and I take it seriously. I truly believe that this is why I have been able to conquer so many battles and have made it so far. I am doing well, feel great, work full-time and raise a family. I make my health a top priority on my daily to-do list. Make yours a top priority and make yourself another success story because you stayed healthy and stayed immunized!

*Dixie Moncus, Olin, North Carolina*

*Member of the Southeastern Kidney Council Consumer Committee and STIC*



**Words of  
Wisdom  
From  
One  
Patient  
to  
Another**

(words of  
wisdom  
continued on  
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We dialysis patients are at a disadvantage to begin with. Anything we can do to improve our health is a tremendous plus. Eating right, drinking fluids at the correct level, exercising, etc. makes our life that much more pleasurable and long.

It goes without saying that along with not skipping treatments, or going short, having a good attitude and preventing illness is very important. So along with the things already mentioned, keeping our immunizations up to date is vital. Get your flu shot as soon as possible. Get them from the county, your personal physician or your dialysis unit whichever one has them first. The cost is the same. Its not like we are afraid of needles!

We are surrounded by others that are as debilitated as we or worse. It is our responsibility not to give them anything and definitely not to catch anything.

As Grandma used to say, "A word to the wise is sufficient."

*Clarence "Ken" McGee, Pinehurst, North Carolina*  
Member of the Southeastern Kidney Council Consumer Committee and STIC

Attention all Dialysis Patients,

Please listen to your doctors and nurses and get your prescribed shots. If you are serious about your health, you will take it serious and get them. I can't think of a single reason not to put up a shield of resistance for sickness.

I have personally taken all of my immunization prescriptions. The pain is small compared to the gain of defense of sickness. Being on dialysis myself, I have to take it serious.

*Elbert Elvis, King, North Carolina*  
Member of the Southeastern Kidney Council Consumer Committee and STIC

# Checklist for Immunizations

The following checklist will help you determine if you need any vaccines! If you answer yes to any of the questions then talk to your dialysis facility staff about vaccinations!



## Influenza vaccination (Flu Shot) - REMEMBER THIS IS A YEARLY VACCINE

- I'd like to be vaccinated to avoid getting the flu and spreading it to others
- I am age 50 or older
- I have End Stage Renal Disease
- I live with or provide care for a child younger than age 5
- I am younger than age 50 and have an ongoing health problem, such as lung, heart, kidney, liver, or blood disease; diabetes; HIV/AIDS; a disease that affects my immune system; a neurologic condition; or a health condition that may cause me to choke when I swallow
- I live with or provide care for an adult age 50 or older or who has one of the health conditions described above
- I live in a nursing home or chronic care facility

## Pneumococcal vaccination

- I am age 65 or older, and I have never had a pneumococcal shot
- I am age 65 or older and had one pneumococcal shot when I was younger than age 65; it has been 5 years or more since that shot
- I am younger than age 65, I have not been vaccinated against pneumococcal disease, and at least one of the following applies to me:
  - I have heart, lung (including asthma), liver, **kidney**, or sickle cell disease; diabetes; or alcoholism
  - I have a weakened immune system due to cancer, Hodgkin's disease, leukemia, lymphoma, multiple myeloma, **kidney failure**, HIV/AIDS
  - I am receiving radiation therapy
  - I am on medication that suppresses my immune system
  - I have had an organ or bone marrow transplant

## Checklist for Immunizations continued.....

### Hepatitis B vaccination

- I am or will be on **kidney dialysis**
- I want to be vaccinated to avoid getting hepatitis B and spreading it to others
- I am age 18 or younger and haven't completed the series of hepatitis B shots.
- I was vaccinated with hepatitis B vaccine in the past but never completed the full 3-dose series
- I am sexually active and am not in a long-term, mutually monogamous relationship
- I am an immigrant, or my parents are immigrants from an area of the world where Hepatitis B is common
- I live with or am a sex partner of a person with hepatitis B
- I have been diagnosed with a sexually transmitted disease
- I have been diagnosed with HIV
- I inject street drugs
- I have chronic liver disease
- I am a healthcare or public safety worker who is exposed to blood or other body fluids
- I provide direct services for people with developmental disabilities
- I travel outside the U.S.

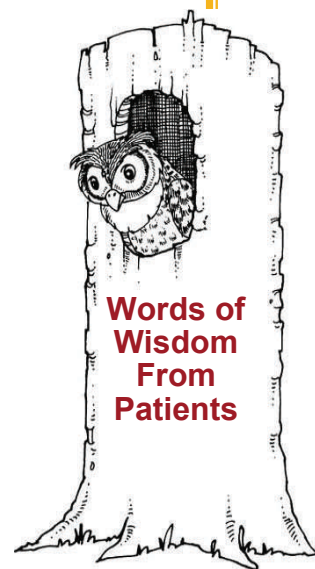
After getting on dialysis the doctor told me I needed to take the three series of shots to protect me from getting Hepatitis B. It was my understanding that being on dialysis makes it easier for a person to be infected with the Hepatitis B virus.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has a great web site to access more information about Hepatitis B and other vaccines—[www.CDC.gov](http://www.CDC.gov). On the website you can download information about systems, problems caused by the disease and is written in easy to understand words.

**Take care and the best of health for you !**

*James R. Humphrey, Reidsville, North Carolina*

*Member of the Southeastern Kidney Council Consumer Committee and STIC*



# Infection Control in the Dialysis Unit Be A Germ Fighter! Knock them OUT!

Infection is the second leading cause of death for hemodialysis patients. In 2009, infection was the number 1 citation during the recertification process by the state survey agency. Infection Control in the Dialysis Unit is VERY Important. Here are some tips to pass on to other patients and staff members! Be a Germ Fighter—it's your health too!

## Infection Control Tips: Remember Hand Hygiene includes washing with antibacterial soap and water and/or alcohol based hand rubs

- All **staff members and patients** should be vaccinated against:
  - Influenza
  - Pneumococcal
  - Hepatitis
- Staff members should wear Personal Protective Equipment when working with patients
- Patients with a catheter should wear a face mask when the tips of the catheter are exposed
- Patients should have their catheter dressing changed EVERY treatment AND if it becomes soiled between treatments
- Patients should wash their dialysis access with antibacterial soap and water before each treatment
- Staff members must perform hand hygiene:
  - Before caring for patients
  - Before placement of an invasive device (fistula needles)
  - Before administering medications
  - After every contact with a patient or a potentially contaminated surface or object
  - After touching blood or body fluids
  - After removing gloves
  - Between tasks on the same patient
  - When hands are visibly soiled (must use soap and water—NOT Alcohol Hand Rub)
  - After using the restroom
  - Before preparing or handling food



## Be a Germ Fighter! Infection Control in the Dialysis Unit is everyone's Responsibility!



We need to hear from YOU! If you have questions, concerns, advice or would like to submit an article for our next newsletter, contact us at 1-800-524-7139 or email us at [info@nw6.esrd.net](mailto:info@nw6.esrd.net). We are here to assist YOU!

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