According to the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), children are not the only ones who need to be immunized. Adults should also take advantage of immunizations whenever possible. Below is information taken directly from the CDC’s website. For more information, visit: [http://www.cdc.gov/](http://www.cdc.gov/)

**Adults Need Immunizations, Too**

Your need for immunizations doesn't end when you reach adulthood. Get and maintain protection against vaccine-preventable diseases for your health and for your family's health. Be the example!

Immunizations are NOT just for kids! Whether a young adult, middle-aged adult, or senior citizen, we ALL need immunizations to keep us healthy. Transitioning to adulthood brings us into a new world, bringing a different level of responsibility that we carry for life, including the need to help protect our loved ones more than ever.
Do You Need Any Vaccines?

The specific immunizations you need as an adult are determined by factors such as your age, lifestyle, high-risk conditions, type and locations of travel, and previous immunizations. Throughout your adult life, you need immunizations to get and maintain protection against:

- **Seasonal influenza (flu)** (In general, anyone who is 6 months or older can benefit from the protection of a flu vaccination.)
- **Tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (whooping cough)** (for adults up to 64 years, one booster dose)
- **Shingles** (for adults 60 years and older)
- **Pneumococcal disease** (for adults 65 years and older and adults with specific health conditions)
- **Human papillomavirus (HPV)** infection (for women 26 years and younger)

Other vaccinations you may need include those that protect against hepatitis A, hepatitis B, chickenpox (varicella), and measles, mumps and rubella.

Are You an Advocate for Your Family?

Your need for immunizations does not end when you reach adulthood. In fact, the need for immunization remains just as strong as when we were vulnerable children. As adults, we must continue to maintain our own health because we are also affecting the health of our families by teaching them how to care for themselves.
Encourage other adults in your family to check with their doctors for immunizations they may need to help protect against vaccine-preventable diseases. Childhood vaccinations will not protect you for the rest of your life.

**Be the Example!**

Remind your family, friends, co-workers, and those in the community to get vaccinated each year against seasonal influenza. If they are up-to-date on all of their vaccinations, they protect themselves and those around them, especially babies too young to be vaccinated.
Choose The Hearing Protection That's Right For You
- by Carol Merry Stephenson, Ph.D.

**Expandable foam plugs**

These plugs are made of a formable material designed to expand and conform to the shape of each person's ear canal. Roll the expandable plugs into a thin, crease-free cylinder. Whether you roll plugs with thumb and fingers or across your palm doesn't matter. What's critical is the final result—a smooth tube thin enough so that about half the length will fit easily into your ear canal. Some individuals, especially women with small ear canals, have difficulty rolling typical plugs small enough to make them fit. A few manufacturers now offer a small size expandable plug.

**Pre-molded, reusable plugs**

Pre-molded plugs are made from silicone, plastic or rubber and are manufactured as either “one-size-fits-most” or are available in several sizes. Many pre-molded plugs are available in sizes for small, medium or large ear canals.

A critical tip about pre-molded plugs is that a person may need a different size plug for each ear. The plugs should seal the ear canal without being uncomfortable. This takes trial and error of the various sizes. Directions for fitting each model of pre-molded plug may differ slightly depending on how many flanges they have and how the tip is shaped. Insert this type of plug by reaching over your head with one hand to pull up on your ear. Then use your other hand to insert the plug with a gentle rocking motion until you have sealed the ear canal.

Advantages of pre-molded plugs are that they are relatively inexpensive, reusable, washable, convenient to carry, and come in a variety of sizes. Nearly everyone can find a plug that will be comfortable and effective. In dirty or dusty environments, you don't need to handle or roll the tips.

**Canal caps**

Canal caps often resemble earplugs on a flexible plastic or metal band. The earplug tips of a canal cap may be a formable or pre-molded material. Some have headbands that can be worn over the head, behind the neck or under the chin. Newer models have jointed bands increasing the ability to properly seal the earplug.

The main advantage canal caps offer is convenience. When it's quiet, employees can leave the band hanging around their necks. They can quickly insert the plug tips when hazardous noise starts again. Some people find the pressure from the bands uncomfortable. Not all canal caps have tips that adequately block all types of noise. Generally, the canal caps tips that resemble stand-alone earplugs seem to block the most noise.
Earmuffs

Earmuffs come in many models designed to fit most people. They work to block out noise by completely covering the outer ear. Muffs can be "low profile" with small ear cups or large to hold extra materials for use in extreme noise. Some muffs also include electronic components to help users communicate or to block impulsive noises.

Workers who have heavy beards or sideburns or who wear glasses may find it difficult to get good protection from earmuffs. The hair and the temples of the glasses break the seal that the earmuff cushions make around the ear. For these workers, earplugs are best. Other potential drawbacks of earmuffs are that some people feel they can be hot and heavy in some environments.

Miscellaneous devices

Manufacturers are receptive to comments from hearing protection users. This has led to the development of new devices that are hybrids of the traditional types of hearing protectors. (Visit NIOSH searchable compendium of hearing protectors) Because many people like the comfort of foam plugs, but don’t want to roll them in dirty environments, a plug is now available that is essentially a foam tip on a stem. You insert this plug much like a pre-molded plug without rolling the foam.

Scientists are developing earmuffs using high-tech materials to reduce weight and bulk, but still effectively block noise. On the horizon may be earplugs with built in two-way communication capability.

Still, the best hearing protector is the one that is comfortable and convenient and that you will wear every time you are in an environment with hazardous noise.