

“This year I resolve to never eat chocolate again, exercise every single day and win the lottery.” Does this sound familiar?

Every year millions of Americans vow that this will be the year they will improve their health. For most of us that means turning to diet and exercise only to find ourselves slipping back into the same old habits two months later. Improving your health is not limited to diet and exercise, there is something that you can do to improve your health that only takes one day. Update your immunizations!

Before you ask “aren’t shots just for kids” or rush to your doctor to get every shot in the book, read on to find out how immunizations can improve your health.

***Educate yourself*** about the facts of vaccine preventable diseases. Some diseases, such as measles, are more life-threatening to adults than children. According to the National Foundation of Infectious Disease, in 2006 the majority of measles cases were in people over 20 years old. Find out if your age or lifestyle puts you at risk for any specific diseases. For example, if you are 60 years or older you may need a shingles shot and if you are a woman younger than 27 you should get a cervical cancer shot.

***Know your status.*** Most of us probably haven’t thought about our vaccination record in years or even decades. When many of us were growing up shots were not mandatory and we counted on getting immunity from relatives who had gotten a certain disease. Know what you might be at risk for and what shots are recommended for you. Go to [www2.cdc.gov/nip/adultImmSched/](http://www2.cdc.gov/nip/adultImmSched/) to take a quiz that will tell you what shots you might need.

***Reduce your risk*** by getting the shots that you need. Some diseases, such as hepatitis, cannot be cured once you get it. This means that you could be living with a disease for the rest of your life that can cause additional health problems and require expensive treatment. Luckily, many diseases like hepatitis can be prevented simply by getting a shot. This is one of the only health resolutions that you can complete in one day!

Talk with your doctor or visit the Polk County Health Department at [www.polkcountyiowa.gov/health](http://www.polkcountyiowa.gov/health) to learn more about adult immunizations and come one step closer to starting a healthy new year.