# **Vaccine-Preventable Diseases**

# Chickenpox

(also called varicella) was one of the most common childhood diseases. Before the vaccine, there were about 4 million cases a year in the United States. The chickenpox virus usually causes mild illness with a fever and an itchy rash. It also can lead to severe skin infections, scars, and serious problems. About 1 child in 500 who gets chickenpox is hospitalized (about 1 in 50 adults).

Click here to hear a personal story about Chickenpox.

## Diphtheria

causes a thick covering in the back of the throat that makes it hard to breathe or swallow. About 1 in 10 people with diphtheria die from breathing problems, paralysis, or heart failure. Before the vaccine, about 150,000 people a year got diphtheria in the United States.

# Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)

is a bacteria that can cause serious problems including meningitis, brain damage, deafness, pneumonia, infections of the blood, joints, bone, and heart covering, and death. As recently as the mid-1980s, it struck 1 out of 200 children under age 5 years old.

Click <u>here</u> to hear a personal story about Hib.

## **Hepatitis A**

is a serious liver disease that is usually spread by close personal contact or by eating contaminated food or water. Hepatitis A can cause mild, "flu-like" illness, jaundice (yellow skin or eyes), and severe stomach pains and diarrhea.

# **Hepatitis B**

is another serious liver disease that can cause short-term (acute) illness. Some people develop a long-term (chronic) illness that leads to liver damage (cirrhosis), liver cancer, and death. Even though these people may not feel sick, they carry the virus and can infect other people. The virus is spread though contact with blood and other bodily fluids of an infected person. Pregnant women can infect their newborn.

Click here to hear a personal story about Hepatitis B.

# Human Papillomavirus (HPV)

is a group of viruses that is the most common sexually transmitted virus in the United States. About 80% of women in the United States become infected during their lives. Some types of HPV cause genital warts in women and men. Cervical cancer is caused by HPV. About 11,150 women get cervical cancer each year in the United States.

Click here to hear a personal story about HPV.

# Influenza (flu)

is caused by the influenza virus, which spreads from person to person through coughing, sneezing, or breathing. Influenza can lead to serious complications, like pneumonia. Influenza viruses are continually changing, so the immunity you get in one year may not protect you in future years. In the United States, influenza causes more deaths (about 36,000 per year) than any other vaccine-preventable disease.

Click here to hear a personal story about Influenza.

### Measles

virus causes a rash, cough, runny nose, and fever. It can lead to ear infections, pneumonia, seizures, brain damage, and even death. Measles is so contagious that in 1962, the year before the vaccine, almost 500,000 cases of measles were reported in the United States. While once almost eliminated from the United States, there have been recent outbreaks in California and elsewhere.

Click here to hear a personal story about Measles.

# Meningococcal Disease

is a severe bacterial infection of the bloodstream or meninges (a thin lining covering the brain and spinal cord). Meningococcal disease can progress very fast. A healthy child can move from a rash to a fever, coma, and death in less than a day. Each year, about 2,500 people get meningococcal disease in the United States and 300 die.

Click here to hear a personal story about Meningococcal disease.

# Mumps

virus is best known for causing swollen cheeks and jaw, as a result of swollen salivary glands. It also causes fever, headache, and can lead to meningitis in about 1 child in 10 who gets the disease, and, occasionally deafness or death. Before the vaccine mumps was a very common childhood disease, now it is uncommon.

#### **Pertussis**

(also called whooping cough) causes coughing spells so bad that it is hard to eat, drink, or breathe. These spells can last for weeks. It can lead to pneumonia, seizures, brain damage, and death. Pertussis is very contagious, and is fairly common in the United States, even today.

Click here to hear a personal story about Pertussis.

## Pneumococcal Disease

is a bacterial disease that can cause serious infections of the lungs (pneumonia), the bloodstream, and the brain. It is often thought of a disease of the elderly, but it also causes many health problems in children under 5. Pneumococcal disease accounts for 10 to 25% of the pneumonia cases each year and is the leading cause of bacterial meningitis in the United States.

Click here to hear a personal story about Pneumococcal disease.

#### Polio

is a disease caused by a virus which can cause paralysis. It can kill people who get it, usually by paralyzing the muscles that help them breathe. Even though there is no longer wild polio in the United States, it is still common in some parts of the world.

Click here to hear a personal story about Polio.

#### **Rotavirus**

is the most common cause of severe diarrhea and vomiting in the world among young children. It kills about 500,000 children a year worldwide. Rotavirus is easy to spread and is often accompanied by a fever.

Click here to hear a personal story about Rotavirus.

#### Rubella

(also called German Measles) is caused by a virus that usually leads to mild fever and a rash. The greatest danger from rubella is to unborn babies. If a pregnant woman gets rubella, there is an 80% chance the baby will be born with serious birth defects. Miscarriages are also common. Since the vaccine, the disease has been disappearing.

Click here to hear a personal story about Rubella.

## **Shingles**

(also called herpes zoster) causes a rash with painful blisters. Shingles occurs in people who have already had chickenpox. After chickenpox infection, the varicella virus lives silently in a person for many years. As we get older, the virus can reawaken and cause shingles.

Click <u>here</u> to hear a personal story about Shingles.

#### **Tetanus**

(also called Lockjaw) is caused by a bacteria that lives in the soil and enters the skin through a cut. It causes painful tightening of the muscles in the body. It can lead to "locking" of the jaw so the person cannot open their mouth or swallow and death. Before the vaccine, there were about 600 cases of tetanus each year in the United States.

Personal stories were compiled by Shot By Shot.



Shot by Shot: Stories of Vaccine-Preventable Diseases is a collection of stories from people who have been touched by vaccine-preventable diseases. With the success of vaccines, we don't see diseases like meningitis, polio, and hepatitis as often as our parents or grandparents did, but the diseases still touch people in our own communities and cause a huge amount of suffering and death worldwide. Shot by shot's storybank of real-life stories, told by survivors, family members, friends, and health care providers, brings first-hand experiences to new generations. Personal stories touch us, educate us, and remind us of the value of prevention.