

FDA Recognizes National Immunization Awareness Month

Source: <https://www.fda.gov/news-events/fda-voices/fda-recognizes-national-immunization-awareness-month>



National Immunization Awareness Month provides us an opportunity to think about how far the development and advancement of immunization science has come, and its impact on public health. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration plays a key role in immunization by evaluating vaccines for safety and effectiveness before they are made available to the public.

Vaccines work by stimulating the body's immune system to safely provide protection against viruses or bacteria that cause infection. After vaccination, the immune system is prepared to respond quickly when the body encounters the disease-causing organism.

Why are vaccines important? They help provide protection from an infectious disease and can lessen the severity of illness. If you are immune to a disease, you can be exposed to it without becoming sick. Simply put, because of advances in medical science, vaccines can help protect us against more diseases than ever before. Some diseases that once injured or killed thousands of people have been eliminated primarily due to vaccines.

As a medical doctor, I know all too well how important vaccinations are throughout life, helping people of all ages live longer, healthier lives. The World Health Organization estimates that immunization currently prevents 3.5-5 million deaths External Link Disclaimer every year from diseases like diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, influenza and measles and tens of millions of people are alive today because of the COVID-19 vaccines.

Getting the right information about immunization in the digital age, however, can be like drinking from a fire hose. Most Americans are on the receiving end of a constant barrage of information coming at them through phones, laptops, TVs, and social media. Trying to filter fact from fiction can be a challenge, but oh so critical when it comes to public health.

When it comes to immunizations, it's important to remember three things.

FDA Authorizes or Approves Vaccines Based on Rigorous Evaluation and Analysis of Data

Vaccines to prevent infectious diseases are given to millions of babies, children, adolescents and adults, so it is critical that they are demonstrated to be safe and effective. Vaccines undergo a rigorous FDA evaluation of laboratory and clinical data to ensure their safety, effectiveness and manufacturing quality. The FDA's Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research (CBER) is responsible for regulating vaccines.

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August 2023 Calendar

*National Immunization Awareness Month
National Breastfeeding Month
National Minority Donor Awareness Month*

- 1-7 – World Breastfeeding Week
- 3 – Buddhist Lent Day (Buddhism)
- 12 - International Youth Day
- 13 - International Left-handers Day
- 15 – Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary (Western Christian)
- 19 – World Humanitarian Day
- 21 – International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism
- 21 – National Senior Citizens Day (US)
- 23 – Day for Remembrance of the Slave Trade and Its Abolition (international)
- 26 – National Dog Day (US)
- 26 - Women's Equality Day (US)

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COVID-19 Vaccines and Flu Vaccines Save Lives

Specific to COVID-19 vaccines, CBER has been integral in overseeing the development of the vaccines to prevent COVID-19 and authorizing and approving the vaccines that are proven to meet criteria for safety and effectiveness. Working with manufacturers in order to get the vaccines to the public as quickly as possible, while adhering to the FDA’s rigorous scientific and regulatory evaluation process, has enabled one of the major achievements in the history of biomedical science. The FDA will only approve or authorize a vaccine for emergency use if it meets the agency’s standards for safety, effectiveness, and manufacturing quality. We have a dedicated group of experienced scientific and medical professionals evaluating the available data to make sound, scientific decisions about these vaccines.

Staying up to date with COVID-19 vaccination is the best way to help protect against severe illness and hospitalization from COVID-19. Even fully vaccinated people may get infected. However, for people who have received both the primary series and a booster dose when eligible, the symptoms are often much less serious. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) considers that you are up to date with your COVID-19 vaccines when you have received all doses in the primary series and all boosters recommended for you, when eligible. COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective in preventing the most severe forms of COVID-19. Being up to date on COVID-19 vaccination reduces a person’s risk of dying by over 90% – a remarkable effect.

And it’s not too soon to start thinking about influenza (flu) viruses which typically spread in fall and winter. The flu is a contagious respiratory disease that is caused by influenza viruses which infect the respiratory tract (nose, throat, and lungs). The flu is different from a cold because the symptoms and complications can be more severe.

A lot of the illness and death caused by the influenza virus can be prevented by a yearly influenza vaccine. The CDC recommends that most individuals 6 months of age and older get the flu vaccine every year. It is especially important for people in high-risk groups.

Be Smart When Considering Your Source of Information

Drinking from a fire hose is rarely a fruitful endeavor and a good filter can be helpful. One of my priorities is to focus on countering the growing dissemination of misinformation and disinformation about science, medicine, and the FDA, which is putting patients and consumers at risk. Increasingly people are being distracted and misled.

The constant stream of information, opinion and, too often, disinformation, has eroded trust in societal institutions, including the FDA – and, regrettably, in the science upon which our decisions are based. This is causing harm to patients and consumers. It greatly concerns me that people are choosing not to receive the COVID-19 vaccines and are falling behind on routine vaccinations.

The FDA is working to promote reliable information and discredit misinformation or disinformation that is intentionally designed to harm people. For accurate information about immunizations, look for information from our U.S. government partners, such as the CDC and your local health authority. It’s ok to have questions about vaccines, so if you do, talk to a health care professional.

Vaccines have prevented countless cases of disease and disability and have saved millions of lives. We are so fortunate that today, because of safe and effective vaccines, few people experience the devastating effects of measles, pertussis and other serious illnesses.

For you and every member of your family, it is important to stay up to date with vaccinations. August is National Immunization Awareness Month, now is a great time to get back on track with routine vaccinations.

Bilingualism That Goes Beyond Minds: The Impact on Body Language

Source: <https://www.mcislanguages.com/bilingualism-that-goes-beyond-minds-the-impact-on-body-language/>



If you put two students who speak the same language and are starting to learn the same second language in a room and forbid them from speaking their mother tongue, what will improve in three days?

Their body language skills.

This might be a joke, but it just shows the importance of body language to our daily communication: whatever we cannot communicate with speech, we fill in with gestures, facial expressions and other non-verbal cues.

If you are bilingual or a polyglot, you might have had this experience: you feel like a different person when switching to a second language. As you code-switch with your words, your body behaves differently, as if it has automatically employed a different operating system that has a new set of defaults.

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We have all heard stories and tips from those who have travelled across the world: the English show less emotion. Latinos are passionate. Refrain from physical touch when you address the Japanese. Be liberated with your gestures when talking to an Italian. Certain languages seem to have connections with how these languages are used, and we as speakers, inherit the language’s personality, all without consciousness.

This change in body language when bilinguals switch their spoken languages is backed up by studies. An academic paper that was published in 2019 investigated gesture patterns of second-generation Turkish bilinguals living in the Netherlands. When switching between Turkish, a higher-gesture language, and Dutch, a lower-gesture language, the bilingual participants showed different tendencies and rates of using gestures, which are consistent with the behaviours of monolingual speakers in each of the two languages. Even though Dutch is the majority language in the society, participants have maintained the cross-linguistic differences and did not adapt to the habits of the dominant culture when speaking Turkish. This demonstrated that gesture rate correlates with speaking in the language that one speaks. The authors of the paper concluded that language and gesture go hand in hand.

Other studies have shown that bilingualism affects both the mind and bodies. Researchers discovered that some motions may employ the same brain regions as the actual activities they relate to in the formation of language. Moreover, experiments found that when bilingual participants read the same information written in their first and second languages, their facial muscles showed different relaxation and contraction patterns. The same smile, when reacting to words in different languages, could (and maybe should) be interpreted differently.

Due to the difference in how non-verbal communication is performed and interpreted in different languages, some scholars advised that body language should be proactively involved in language learning and more importantly, teaching. They recommend that language teachers should try to teach non-native students not only what is grammatically well-formed or correct but also what is socio-pragmatically and socio-semiotically appropriate. Consciously adjusting one’s body language when speaking a different language is not only an effective way of avoiding miscommunication but also a faster route for language learners to blend into the community.

However, in the recent years, there emerged another voice calling for attention and bashing the conscious code-switching in body language. In the paper published by University of California Speaking Bodies: Body Bilinguality and Code-Switching In Latina/O Performance, the author sees the act of minority language speakers purposely changing their body language to that of English in order to fit in as a sign of imbalanced social power dynamic and invisible oppression. As a young, mixed-race kid, she recalls visiting her father’s Irish American relatives and making an effort to appear more White than Latina through body language. “Identity is performed,” she wrote, “power is enacted through bodies.” She further added, “By looking specifically at the way in which the body uses gesture, movement, and language to switch between and across codes, this density of cultural knowledge and the construction of identity can be sifted through layer by layer.”

In conclusion, bilingualism affects speakers’ body language and vice versa. Being bilingual, some are unconsciously affected by this mind-body correlation without awareness, while others purposely switch their body language to achieve effective communication. Some consciously resist code-switching to protect their mother tongue’s identity and cultural memory. To our bilingual and multilingual readers, what do you do? When options are there, do you fight it or go with the flow?

New Staff Profile: Ana Paulino



Ana Lucia (Ana) is the newest interpreter joining our UC Davis Health Spanish interpreting team. Ana was born in Lima, Peru and moved to the United States at the age of 14. At that time, her knowledge of the English language was limited and she had to rely on family and friends as interpreters. Although it was challenging, she attained fluency in English and went on to receive a Bachelor’s degree in Anthropology from UC Santa Cruz.

Ana began interpreting professionally in 2016 while working with local agencies. She received National Certification through CCHI in 2022. She feels grateful to be able to provide the services she once needed by facilitating communication between patients and providers, and therefore improving the quality of life for members of her community. She also loves that interpreting provides opportunities for constant learning, whether it is learning about medical technologies and treatments or cultural practices and traditions from different parts of the Spanish-speaking world. She finds this knowledge very enriching, and it is one of the reasons she sees herself working in this profession for many years.

In her free time, Ana enjoys spending time with family and friends, working on arts and crafts projects, trying foods from around the world, and reading.

Welcome onboard, Ana! We are happy to have you as a part of UC Davis Health team!