



Chris Mayboca gives an immunization shot to my wife, Carol Rackay. (Special to the Montrose Daily Press/ Mark Rackay)

# Immunize before the trip

The time was 1963 and I was serving a sentence in the first grade. The teacher stated that we would all be receiving vaccinations for polio the following day. I paid little attention to the announcement because I knew not what polio or a vaccination was, but after the ordeal, I would never forget.

As we lined up in the hall, I watched the end of the line. Kids were laughing and carrying on, so I thought that all would be fine. Upon reaching the end of the line, I was handed a paper cup that contained a sugar cube, which I immediately devoured and looked for another. I explained to the teacher that we should do this every day.

I was promoted to second grade, after what my teacher referred to as a “photo finish.” Shortly after my incarceration in the second, the famous “vaccination day” rolled around.

This time in line, I noticed kids crying and screaming at the end. I tried a daring escape, but a couple of goons caught me and returned me to the line. Once at the end, I saw a sinister person with a needle. She was sticking the needle in each kid and laughing about it. So much for the sugar cubes.

Fast forward a bunch of years, and I am visiting my family doctor. After I informed him of an upcoming hunting trip out of the country, he left the room for a few minutes.

The good doc came back with a tray full of needles, and I left his office with a fantail full of vaccinations and an inability to sit for a few days. That’s the last time I tell him I am going on a trip.

The reality is vaccinations should be a part of everyone’s preparations. Getting immunized may not only keep you healthy for your trip, but can save your life.

I will assume that most of you had the childhood diseases of measles, mumps, rubella and chicken pox. If you have, no need to think of them again. There are vaccinations for these available now, and if you have not had these diseases, you might consider getting immunized. Discuss this with your doctor because nobody wants to spend a trip abroad with the measles.

I recently spent some time at Montrose County Health and Human Services, to find out what can be done to protect people from disease. The people there can handle a wide array of health needs and offer advice about many issues, including travel requirements for vaccinations. Since I am a first responder and travel frequently out of the country, keeping up on vaccinations is important, as it should be for you also.

I met with Chris Mayboca, the public health nurse. Chris has been giving me vaccinations for over a dozen



## Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

years and is a wealth of knowledge for the traveler. I told Chris of my upcoming trip to the jungles of Argentina and she quickly explained what diseases I should seek immunizations for.

There are a number of immunizations that every person, especially outdoor people, should consider with the first being the annual flu shot. This shot no longer uses the live vaccine that made people sick years ago. The injection is quick and does a good job keeping the flu away.

I have been getting immunized for the flu for better than 20 years, and have had no ill effects from the shot. Nothing can ruin an excursion faster than a dose of the flu. What’s worse is that the flu can spread like wildfire through everyone you come in contact with, so get the shot.

Anyone who has had chicken pox should consider getting immunized for shingles. This disease is very painful and can definitely put a crimp in your activity.

There is a new vaccine for shingles called Shingrix. This vaccine is given to people over age 50 in two doses, several months apart. Ask anyone who has ever had the shingles, and they will tell you to get the shots.

A very important immunization everyone should stay up on, especially outdoors people is the Tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis or Tdap. This shot protect against tetanus, also known as “lockjaw,” among other diseases.

Tetanus is caused by a bacteria found in soil, manure or dust. It enters the body through animal bites, burns or puncture wounds. Tetanus can be deadly, and is found everywhere in the world, so it is wise to stay current with your vaccinations.

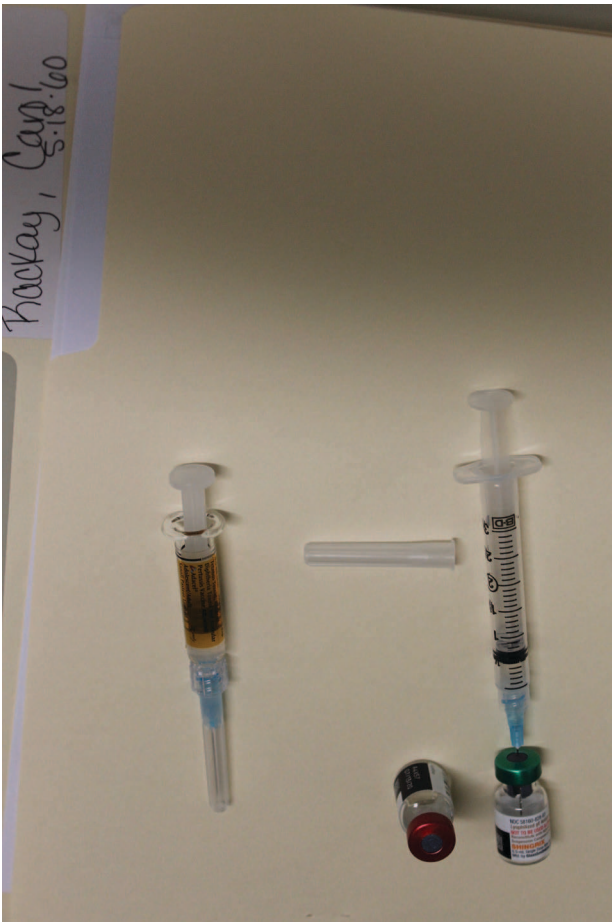
Chris explained that the Center For Disease Control (CDC) recommends everyone get a booster for this every 10 years. It may not be necessary for you to get the pertussis booster, so seek the advice of a healthcare professional.

There are also vaccines available for hepatitis A and B. These diseases are transmitted from person to person through contact with the feces of people infected. This happens when an infected person does not wash their hands properly.

You can also contract this disease from food, water or objects contaminated with the disease. Travelers and first responders should pay special attention to these diseases and immunize accordingly. The shots may help protect you from questionable camp food.

I know there are many people who are dead set against vaccinations. I can testify from personal experience, the side effects and long-term effects are not near as bad as the disease itself. Speak with your doctor or the good folks at Health and Human Services about what is best for you. They are a wealth of information for just about all things health related.

Chris explained to me I would need to consider a Typhoid vaccination before my trip. Before I could bolt for the door, she told me it comes in a pill form, and lasts for five years. This would cover me for my upcoming Africa



These needles are far worse than a sugar cube but much better than getting the illness they protect you from. (Special to the Montrose Daily Press/ Mark Rackay)

trip as well.

I then learned that the CDC recommends a yellow fever vaccination since I will be in the jungle, as well as a malaria pill. With all these diseases out there I should just stay here in the land of the free, but I really want to explore these exotic places. I just hope that these vaccines come in the form of a sugar cube. My fantail can’t handle any more shots.

Mark Rackay is a columnist for the Montrose Daily Press and avid hunter who travels across North and South America in search of adventure and serves as a Director for the Montrose County Sheriff’s Posse. For information about the Posse call 970-252-4033 (leave a message) or email info@mcspi.org

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