



September 2024

In the Loop

Consumer Prices Dropped in June For the First Time in 4 Years

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [reported](#) that the consumer price index (CPI) rose 3% year over year in June, declining from 3.3% in May. This is the first time since May 2020 that the monthly rate has shown a decrease.

The "core" CPI, which strips out the unpredictable food and energy components, increased 0.1% in June from May and 3.3% annually, which closely matched projections of 0.2% and 3.4%, respectively. This is the lowest the core CPI has been since April 2021.

June prices were driven by falling gas prices and a drop in new and used car prices. Prices have also deflated for a range of items like physical goods, airfare, gasoline and some groceries. While Fed policymakers target inflation at 2% annually, the June CPI report further proves that the price trend is headed in the right direction.

The real average hourly earnings increased 0.4% in June when adjusted for inflation and increased just 0.8% over the past year. The Federal Reserve (Fed) wants labor demand to drop faster to reduce the upward pressure on wages that contribute to high inflation.

Recent reports show that inflation has been cooling in recent months, and, in turn, the Fed has indicated that rate cuts may occur in the near future.

What Does This Mean?

The monthly inflation rate dipped in June for the first time in more than four years, further supporting the Fed's decision to start lowering interest rates later this year. Depending on how much the rates are cut, lower interest rates could provide relief to consumers through better mortgage rates and cheaper loans for vehicles and home improvements.

Consumers may have found mild relief in recent months, but inflation continues to apply financial pressures on most U.S. households. Individuals should continue to monitor the economy and associated inflation trends, adjusting their financial habits accordingly. Additionally, employees should check with their managers for financial and mental wellness benefits and related resources.



The Importance of Routine Vaccinations

When you think of vaccines, your mind may turn to childhood immunizations. However, vaccines are equally vital for adults. Protection from some childhood vaccines can wear off over time, and as you age, your ability to fight infections may weaken, resulting in new health risks.

The World Health Organization reports that vaccinations prevent between 3.5 million and 5 million deaths each year from diseases like diphtheria, influenza (flu), measles and tetanus. By staying updated with recommended vaccines, adults can significantly lower their chances of contracting preventable diseases and stay healthier for longer.

Why Vaccines Matter

Vaccinations are essential to protect against new health risks and shield vulnerable populations. Here are more reasons why routine vaccinations matter:

- **Vaccines have a lifesaving history.** For over 100 years, vaccines have prevented serious diseases that once harmed or killed people of all ages. While some diseases are less common now, they still pose a threat, so staying up to date on vaccines is crucial.
- **Vaccines protect you and your community.** Vaccination is a convenient and safe preventive health care option. By getting vaccinated, you protect your health and prevent the spread of diseases to others in your community. This is essential for those who cannot receive certain vaccines due to age or health conditions.
- **Vaccines prevent serious illness.** Vaccination can prevent severe complications and later illnesses. For instance, annual flu shots reduce infection risk, hospitalization and death from the flu, and hepatitis B vaccines prevent liver damage and cancer caused by the hepatitis B virus.
- **Vaccines are good for travel.** Getting sick while away can disrupt plans and be costly. Staying

current on vaccinations helps you stay healthy during your adventures.

Best Practices for Vaccinations

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [recommends](#) that adults be up to date on routine vaccines, including those for COVID-19 and the flu as well as tetanus, diphtheria and whooping cough (known as Tdap), or tetanus and diphtheria (known as Td). Keep in mind that protection from some childhood vaccines can wear off over time. Furthermore, adults may be more at risk for diseases due to age, job, lifestyle, travel and health conditions.

Take the following steps to stay on top of your vaccinations and preventive care:

- Educate yourself about vaccines, their benefits and common misconceptions. Reliable sources like the CDC provide accessible information.
- Regularly check with health care providers or public health authorities for recommended vaccines based on your age, health conditions and lifestyle.
- Keep a personal immunization record to track vaccinations and ensure timely boosters.
- Include vaccinations in your routine health checkups to address gaps in immunization and enhance your overall health.

Your immune system weakens as you age, making you more susceptible to infections and diseases. Therefore, routine vaccinations are critical for your health and well-being. Prioritizing immunizations and integrating them into your health care routine can help you prevent complications and lead an active life.

For more detailed information on specific vaccines and recommendations, consult a health care professional. They can determine whether you have missed any vaccines or need a booster.