

Do We Need Immunizations?

You may have read or heard lots of different information about immunizations, some good and some bad. Opinions are so easy to find on the Internet, and it can be confusing to know what to believe!

While it is true that some of the diseases are extremely rare in the United States, they are still around. *If immunizations were eliminated, we would see a return of these diseases.* Most are highly contagious and can be spread before we even know there is a problem. In 2014, The United States experienced a record number of *measles* cases with 668 reported in 27 states! According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the majority of the people who got the measles were unvaccinated. This is the greatest number of cases since the measles were reported eliminated in the U.S. in 2000. Why is this? *Because people are not vaccinating their children.*

Some childhood diseases may potentially cause future problems. For example, after we recover from chickenpox, the varicella zoster virus remains dormant in our nerve cells. For one in three adults, the virus later reactivates in the form of shingles, an extremely painful rash that can cause nerve damage.

Are Immunizations Safe?

Although vaccines have saved millions of lives, in recent years many people have criticized them. Some people fear they can potentially harm their children. A lot of research goes into making vaccines safe for your child. Studies are continually conducted to ensure the safety of vaccinations. Thanks to amazing technology, the CDC, along with nine health-care organizations, can share information and monitor the safety of all vaccinations.

Some people have suggested there might be a link between vaccines and developmental disabilities like autism. It is important to know that according to recent research, there is no scientific evidence linking childhood vaccines to autism. Additionally, because of these unsupported theories, nearly 1 in 10 parents refuse or delay vaccinations because they believe it is safer than following the CDC guidelines and schedule. This puts their children at risk for catching these preventable and sometimes dangerous diseases.

With the possibility of disease outbreaks, along with studies that have shown vaccines to be safe, it should be obvious that vaccinations are the right choice for your children. By vaccinating your children, you are not only protecting them now, but you are also protecting them for the future as well.

What Immunizations Are Recommended for Your Child?

The CDC, the American Academy of Physicians, and the American Academy of Pediatrics have teamed up to provide you with an immunization schedule. This schedule recommends vaccinations for over thirteen diseases for children from newborn up to age 6 years old. The diseases these vaccines protect against are:

- Chickenpox
- Flu
- Hepatitis A & B
- Mumps
- Pneumococcal
- Rotavirus
- Tetanus
- Diphtheria
- Haemophilus influenzae type b
- Measles
- Pertussis
- Polio
- Rubella

Keep an immunization record of all your child's vaccinations. You will likely receive an immunization chart from the hospital after you have your baby. They will record her first vaccination in it before she even leaves the hospital. If you don't have it, your pediatrician can provide you with one. Keep it in a safe place, and always take it with you to your baby's checkups.

Recommended Immunization Schedule Ages Birth to 6 Years Old

Birth	1 Month	2 Months	4 Months	6 Months	12 Months	15 Months	18 Months	19-23 Months	2-3 Years	4-6 Years
HepB	HepB			HepB						
		RV	RV	RV						
		DTaP	DTaP	DTaP		DTaP				DTaP
		Hib	Hib	Hib	Hib					
		PCV13	PCV13	PCV13	PCV					
		IPV	IPV	IPV						IPV
		Influenza (Yearly)								
					MMR					MMR
					Varicella					Varicella
					HepA (2-dose series)					

Blue shaded boxes show exact times vaccines should be given.

Yellow shaded boxes indicate the vaccine can be given within the age range.

Vaccine (In the order it appears on the above schedule)	Disease(s) It Protects Against	Disease Spread By	Disease Complications
HepB	Hepatitis B	Contact with blood or body fluids	Chronic liver infection, liver failure, liver cancer
RV	Rotavirus	Through the mouth	Severe diarrhea, dehydration
DTaP	Diphtheria	Air, direct contact	Swelling of the heart muscle, heart failure, coma, paralysis, death
	Tetanus	Exposure through cuts in skin	Broken bones, breathing difficulty, death
	Pertussis (whooping cough)	Air, direct contact	Pneumonia, death
Hib	Haemophilus Influenzae type b	Air, direct contact	Meningitis, intellectual disability, epiglottitis (infection that blocks windpipe), pneumonia, death
PCV13	Pneumococcus	Air, direct contact	Bacteremia (blood infection), meningitis, death
IPV	Polio	Air, direct contact, through mouth	Paralysis, death
Influenza	Flu	Air, direct contact	Pneumonia
MMR	Measles	Air, direct contact	Encephalitis, pneumonia, death
	Mumps	Air, direct contact	Meningitis, encephalitis, swelling of testicles/ovaries, deafness
	Rubella	Air, direct contact	If during pregnancy: miscarriage, premature birth, stillbirth, birth defects
Varicella	Chickenpox	Air, direct contact	Infected blisters, bleeding disorders, encephalitis, pneumonia
HepA	Hepatitis A	Direct contact, contaminated food or water	Liver failure, arthralgia (joint pain), kidney, pancreatic disease, blood disorders

Aug 2018 Recommended Immunization Schedule for ages birth through 6 years old. This schedule is recommended by the US Dept. of Health & Human Services, American Academy of Family Physicians and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Resources include:

- Centers for Disease Control. 2018 Recommended Immunizations for Children from Birth Through 6 Years Old. Found at <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/downloads/parent-ver-sch-0-6yrs.pdf>, accessed 9/26/2018, updated August 2018.
- Centers for Disease Control. MEasles Cases and Outbreaks. Found at <http://www.cdc.gov/measles/cases-outbreaks.html>, accessed 9/26/2018, updated September 26, 2018.