

Childhood Immunizations Questions & Answers

Did you know childhood vaccines provide protection against 14 diseases?



Q. Why does my child need to be immunized?

A. Immunizations protect your child from diphtheria, tetanus (lockjaw), pertussis (whooping cough), polio, measles, mumps, rubella, Hib disease, pneumococcal infection, chickenpox, hepatitis B and rotavirus. Vaccines have saved millions of lives and prevented hundreds of millions of cases of disease. Thanks to immunizations, many of these diseases are not as common now as they were in the past. However, these diseases are still present and can cause pain, fever, rashes, coughs, sore throats, hearing loss, blindness, crippling, brain damage and death.

Q. I have not heard of some of these diseases. Are they really a problem for my child?

A. Yes! While vaccines have greatly reduced the number of people with these diseases, your child could still become infected if not vaccinated.

Q. What vaccines does my child need?

A. Your child will receive the following vaccines between birth and 6 years of age.

- Polio
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Rotavirus
- Influenza
- DTaP (Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis)
- Hib (Haemophilus influenza B)
- Pneumococcal
- Varicella (Chickenpox)
- MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella)

Q. When does my child need vaccines?

A. Your child will need shots at the following ages. These shots will usually be given as part of a well-child visit.

- Birth
- 2 months
- 4 months
- 6 months
- 12 months
- 15 months
- 18 months
- 4-6 years

Q. Is it safe for my child to receive so many vaccines at one time?

A. Getting multiple vaccines at the same visit is safe and effective. The recommended vaccine schedule is developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American Association of Family Physicians (AAFP) and the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC). Using combination vaccines (vaccines that prevent more than one disease) is a way to reduce the number of shots needed at a single visit.

Important Tip!

Keep your child's immunization record in a safe place. You will need to show proof of immunization when your child enters school or if your child attends daycare. To avoid possibly having to be revaccinated, make sure all immunization providers give you a written record of the vaccine(s) provided. Don't forget to bring your child's immunization record to all medical appointments so it can be updated!

Q. Can I delay some vaccines?

A. Delaying or leaving out any vaccine may put your child at risk of serious illness or possibly even death if they are exposed to the disease.

Q. Are vaccines safe?

A. Vaccines are held to the highest standard of safety. The United States currently has the safest, most effective vaccine supply in history. Years of testing are required by law before a vaccine can be licensed. Once in use, vaccines are continually monitored for safety.

Q. Do vaccines cause autism?

A. From time to time, rumors circulate that thimerosal, a mercury-based preservative once used in several vaccines (and still used in some flu vaccine), could contribute to autism. However, valid scientific studies have shown there is no link. The AAP, American Medical Association, CDC and the Institute of Medicine (IOM) agree there is not a link between thimerosal in vaccines and autism. For the IOM report visit www.iom.edu/CMS/3793/4705/4717.aspx

Q. What are common side effects of vaccines?

A. Most side effects of vaccines are mild, such as soreness or redness where the shot is given or a low-grade fever. They last a day or two and then go away.

Q. Can my child get their immunizations if they are sick?

A. Your child can get their immunizations even if they have a stuffy nose, low fever, cough, diarrhea or an ear infection. Your doctor or clinic will decide if your child can receive immunizations.

Q. How much do vaccines cost?

A. Many childhood vaccines are provided at no charge at private doctors' offices, local health departments and community health centers. The following groups of children through 18 years of age are eligible to receive free vaccine through the federal Vaccines for Children (VFC) program: Medicaid eligible, Indian (American Indian or Alaska Native), uninsured and underinsured. Some providers may charge a fee to administer the vaccine. If a vaccine is not provided free of charge by the state, fees may be charged depending on individual health insurance coverage.

Q. What if my child misses an immunization?

A. Most shots are given as a series over a period of time. If a shot is missed, you do NOT need to start the series all over again! The series can be continued as usual, simply picking up where you left off. It is very important that your child receive all the doses in a series to be fully protected.

Q. Where can I take my child to be vaccinated?

A. Your child can be vaccinated at private doctors' offices, local health departments, and community health centers.



For more information call 1-800-232-2522 or visit www.immunizenc.com

