

The decision to immunize your child is important. Get the facts!



### Why should I immunize? ○ ○ ○

#### To prevent common illnesses.

Some diseases in the United States are common, but also very serious, such as whooping cough, flu, and rotavirus. If you choose not to vaccinate, your child will be at risk for serious, and sometimes deadly, diseases.

#### To prevent diseases that exist in the United States.

Some diseases, such as measles and mumps, still occur in our country at low levels. When fewer people get immunized against these diseases, outbreaks may happen.

#### To prevent diseases that exist in other parts of the world.

Some diseases, such as diphtheria, are rare in the United States. But anyone who travels may catch and spread these diseases. They're only a plane ride away.

#### To protect your family and community.

By immunizing your child, you also protect those who:

- Have weakened immune systems.
- Can't get shots because they're too young, too old, or have certain medical conditions.
- Are not fully immunized.

## Learn more about vaccine benefits and risks

### WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH:

- **FREE BOOKLET:** *Plain Talk About Childhood Immunization* (available in English, Spanish, and Russian)
- **DOWNLOAD:** <http://here.doh.wa.gov/materials/plaintalk>
- **ORDER:** [immunematerials@doh.wa.gov](mailto:immunematerials@doh.wa.gov)

### U.S. CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION:

- **VISIT:** [www.cdc.gov/vaccines](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines)
- **CALL:** 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636) or 1-800-232-6348 (TTY)
- **EMAIL:** [NIPINFO@cdc.gov](mailto:NIPINFO@cdc.gov)

### VACCINE EDUCATION CENTER AT THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF PHILADELPHIA:

- **VISIT:** [www.vec.chop.edu](http://www.vec.chop.edu)

### IMMUNIZATION ACTION COALITION:

- **VISIT:** [www.vaccineinformation.org](http://www.vaccineinformation.org)



WithinReach Family Health Hotline  
**1-800-322-2588** (711 TTY relay)  
or [www.ParentHelp123.org](http://www.ParentHelp123.org)



Child Profile is a program of the Washington State Department of Health.

Partially funded by the federal Vaccines for Children program. If you have a disability and need this document in another format, please call 1-800-322-2588 (711 TTY relay).



# Immunizations

○ BIRTH THROUGH 6 YEARS





## Immunize on time ▲ ▲ ▲

### It's best to immunize your child at the earliest recommended age.

Babies and toddlers are more likely than older children to become very ill or disabled, be hospitalized, or even die from diseases that vaccines can prevent. Work with your doctor or nurse to immunize on time.

### Keep updated on child care and school requirements.

Keeping up-to-date also means your child will meet the immunization requirements to start child care, preschool, or kindergarten. Some parents choose to exempt their child from getting one or more vaccines. To do this, state law requires you to get vaccine benefit and risk information and a doctor's signature on the exemption form. Without vaccine protection, your child will be at risk for disease and may need to stay home during a disease outbreak at school or child care.

### What if my child gets off schedule?

If your child falls behind schedule by missing a vaccine dose, catch up as soon as possible. The series does NOT have to be started over. But, your child will not have the best protection against the disease until he or she gets all the doses.

### What if my child is sick?

Immunizations can be given even if your child is taking antibiotics or has a mild fever, cold, or diarrhea. The vaccine will still be effective. It will not make your child's illness worse. At every visit, ask your doctor or nurse if your child is due for immunizations.

## How do vaccines work? ○ ○ ○

### Vaccines create immunity (protection) against serious diseases.

When we get sick, our bodies make antibodies to fight infection. The antibodies stay in our bodies ready to protect us if we get infected by the same germ later on. Vaccines work the same way. They create protective antibodies without making us sick from the disease. Vaccines are the safest way to teach your child's body how to defend itself against serious diseases.

### Why are vaccines given at such a young age?

Babies get vaccines when they have the highest risk of becoming seriously ill from certain diseases and when their immune systems respond best to vaccines. We start immunizing as early as possible to protect children as soon as possible.

### Why so many vaccines at one visit?

Because babies are at high risk for many serious diseases and vaccines help them build immunity to protect

them as soon as possible. We have vaccines to safely protect children against more diseases than ever before. Babies' immune systems can easily handle many vaccines at one visit without being overloaded.

### Why does my child need so many doses of the same vaccine?

Your child needs more than one dose of most vaccines to build the best immunity. Protection increases after each dose your child gets. Children also need "booster doses" of some vaccines throughout their lifetime to stay protected against certain diseases.

## Comfort your child \* \* \*

It may be hard to watch your child get shots. If your child sees you relaxed, he or she is more likely to feel safe. Breathe slowly and stay calm.

### Things you can do to comfort your child at any age:

- Bring along a favorite toy or blanket.
- Hold your child.
- Reassure your child that everything is OK.
- Ask your doctor about when to give medicine to reduce pain or fever.

### For infants:

- Touch your baby gently and talk softly.
- Make eye contact and smile.
- Hold, cuddle, or feed your baby.

### For toddlers:

- Talk to or sing with your child.
- Help him or her take deep breaths and "blow out" the pain.
- Point out posters or objects in the room.
- Tell a story or have your child tell you one.
- Let your child cry. Don't force him or her to be brave. Help your child understand that a shot hurts for a short time, but being sick hurts a lot longer.



**Diseases spread by coughing and sneezing:**

○ **DIPHTHERIA** causes a sore throat and mild fever and can completely block a person's airway. Diphtheria can cause breathing and heart problems, coma, paralysis, and death.

○ **MEASLES** causes a high fever, cold-like symptoms, and a rash. It can lead to pneumonia, hearing loss, brain damage, and death. A child who has not been immunized will most likely get measles if exposed.

○ **RUBELLA** causes a fever and a rash on the face and neck. Pregnant women who get rubella may miscarry or have babies with birth defects, such as blindness, deafness, or developmental delays.

○ **PERTUSSIS (WHOOPIING COUGH)** causes spells of coughing that make it hard for a child to eat, drink, or breathe. Whooping cough can cause pneumonia, seizures, brain damage, and death. Babies younger than six months are at highest risk for being hospitalized and dying from whooping cough. Most babies get the disease from a family member, so older children and adults who have contact with babies should get Tdap (pertussis) vaccine.

○ **HAEMOPHILUS INFLUENZAE type b (Hib)** can cause meningitis (swelling of the covering of the brain and spinal cord); infections of the joints, skin, and blood; brain damage; and death. Hib is most dangerous to children under five.

○ **PNEUMOCOCCAL** disease is the main cause of bacterial meningitis (swelling of the covering of the brain and spinal cord) in young children. It can also cause serious blood infections and pneumonia.

○ **MUMPS** can cause headache; fever; and swelling of the cheeks, neck, or jaw. Mumps can lead to hearing loss, meningitis (swelling of the covering of the brain and spinal cord), and brain damage.

○ **VARICELLA (CHICKENPOX)** causes an itchy skin rash (with blisters) and fever. Chickenpox can be severe and may lead to meningitis (swelling of the covering of the brain and spinal cord), serious skin infections, and pneumonia. Chickenpox may also spread by direct contact with the blisters.

○ **INFLUENZA (FLU)** often causes high fever, cough, headache, and muscle aches. All flu viruses can lead to pneumonia and heart problems. Parents and caregivers should get vaccinated to prevent spreading flu to babies. Flu can be very serious, especially for babies under six months who are too young to get flu vaccine. They often must be hospitalized.

**Diseases spread by putting something into the mouth that has the virus on or in it:**

These diseases are found in the stool (feces) of infected people and spread when a person puts something that has a virus in or on it (food, water, hands, or an object) into his or her mouth:

△ **ROTAVIRUS** causes high fever, vomiting, and severe diarrhea. These symptoms can cause a child to lose body fluids and become dehydrated, which may lead to hospitalization.

△ **POLIO** can cause permanent paralysis and death. There is no treatment for polio. Polio still exists in other countries and is only a plane ride away.

△ **HEPATITIS A** can cause fever, nausea, and vomiting. These symptoms can last for several months. It also causes liver disease.

**Each of these diseases spreads differently:**

\* **HEPATITIS B** spreads by contact with infected blood or other body fluids. It can cause serious liver infections. A mother with hepatitis B can pass the virus to her newborn baby during childbirth. Nine out of ten babies who get infected will develop lifelong (chronic) hepatitis B. Of those, one in four will die of liver problems, including liver cancer, later in life.

\* **TETANUS (LOCKJAW)** spreads by germs that enter the body through a cut or puncture wound. It can cause muscle spasms, breathing problems, and often, death. Protection from tetanus will always be needed because the tetanus germ lives in soil and manure and can't be removed from the environment.

\* **MENINGOCOCCAL** disease spreads by close contact with infected people by kissing, coughing, or sharing anything by mouth, such as utensils or toothbrushes. It can cause meningitis (swelling of the covering of the brain and spinal cord), pneumonia, and bloodstream infection. Severe disease can cause brain damage, deafness, limb loss, and death.

**Immunization:**  
The most important way to protect your child from these 15 serious, and sometimes deadly, diseases.



You need immunizations throughout your lifetime. Be sure your whole family is up-to-date on their vaccinations.



**Recommended Immunization Schedule Ages Birth – 6 Years†**

VACCINE	AGE	Birth	1 month	2 months	4 months	6 months	9 months	12 months	15 months	18 months	19-23 months	2-3 years	4-6 years
Hepatitis B		HepB	HepB	HepB	HepB								
Rotavirus			RV	RV	RV								
Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (whooping cough)			DTaP	DTaP	DTaP	DTaP			DTaP				
Haemophilus influenzae type b			Hib	Hib	Hib	Hib							
Pneumococcal			PCV	PCV	PCV	PCV			PPSV/PCV				
Inactivated Poliovirus			IPV	IPV	IPV								
Influenza (flu)		Influenza (Yearly)											
Measles, Mumps, Rubella					MMR	MMR					MMR		
Varicella (chickenpox)					Varicella					Varicella			
Hepatitis A					HepA (2 doses)					HepA			
Meningococcal		Meningococcal											

† Based on the 2016 schedule of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Academy of Family Physicians.

Find the recommended immunization schedule for ages 7 to 18 years and information about adult immunizations at [www.cdc.gov/vaccines](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines).

This vaccine is recommended at this age or age range.

Your child may need these vaccines if he or she has high-risk conditions. Ask your doctor or nurse for more information.

Your child may get this dose depending on the type of vaccine used. Ask your doctor or nurse for more information.

**If your child misses a recommended dose, get it as soon as possible.**