

# Protecting Your Child with Vaccines



Vaccines are an important part of a healthy life for your child. There are many vaccines for children because we can now prevent more diseases. A lot of research has gone into making vaccines that help prevent disease in the easiest way possible.

The sooner children have their vaccines, the sooner they're protected from illness. Vaccines are an effective way to help your child just enjoy being a kid.

## How do vaccines help?

Vaccines help kids:

- Stay healthy and active
- Stay safe from serious infections
- Not miss school days
- Need fewer healthcare provider visits
- Stay safe from complications from illness
- Get to feel good and just enjoy being a kid

Vaccines can also help parents and caregivers:

- Worry less about your child's risk of infections
- Miss less work time due to caring for a sick child
- Avoid medical costs due to illness

## How do vaccines work?

Vaccines tell your child's own immune system how to prevent certain kinds of disease. A vaccine uses a tiny amount of substance that lets your child's body build up antibodies to a virus or bacteria. This helps to prevent many types of diseases caused by infection.

A vaccine is most often done with an injection by a small needle into an arm or leg. Some vaccines work in 1 shot. Others need to be done in 2 or more shots over a period of time. Some need to be repeated every year. The flu vaccine is an example. This lets your child's immune system build up the right amount of antibodies.

Combination vaccines can help prevent more diseases with fewer shots. These vaccines have more than one type of prevention in a single dose.

## Are vaccines safe?

Vaccines have been used for many years on millions of children to prevent serious disease. It's important to know that:

- Vaccines do not cause illness. Vaccines contain very tiny amounts of inactive forms of germs. They don't contain enough of any germs to cause illness. They just contain enough to help your child's body recognize the germs in the future.
- Vaccines do not cause autism. Researchers are still learning about the causes of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Some people may worry that vaccines could play a role. But studies have not found any

evidence for this.

## **What vaccines does my child need?**

Your child's healthcare provider will talk with you about the types of vaccines kids need. There are a lot of vaccines for children now because vaccine science has improved a lot over time. There are many diseases we can now prevent with simple vaccines. The number of vaccines your child needs depends on the age of your child.

## **Does my child need the yearly flu vaccine?**

Yes—all children should get the yearly flu vaccine. This vaccine reduces their risk of getting the flu and complications from the flu. It's best to have it before the end of October each year. Some children will need 2 doses of vaccine.

## **Where will my child get vaccines?**

Your child will most likely get vaccines at their healthcare provider's office. Your child may also be able to get vaccines at a pharmacy, school, or local vaccine clinic.

## **It's never too late**

If you're worried that your child has missed some vaccines, it's not too late. Your child's healthcare provider can make sure your child gets up to date on their vaccines.

## **Healthy kids still need vaccines**

Vaccines are the easiest way to reduce risk of serious illness, even in very healthy kids.

## **If you have questions**

The best person to talk to is your child's healthcare provider. They can tell you why and how vaccines can help keep your child healthy now, and recommend the right schedule for your child.

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