

9 QUESTIONS EVERY PARENT SHOULD ASK THEIR CHILD'S HEALTHCARE PROVIDER ABOUT VACCINATION

Immunization is an important step that may help protect your child against serious infectious diseases.¹ Whether this is your first child or your fourth, paving the way for your little one's health is very important. It is important that you get your information from credible sources, like your child's healthcare provider.

Here are 9 questions you should ask your healthcare provider to learn more about vaccination. Some of the answers might just surprise you!



1

HOW DO I KNOW WHICH VACCINES MY CHILD NEEDS AND WHEN TO GET THEM?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends a [vaccination schedule](#) to help protect children against 15 serious diseases before the age of 2.² You should talk with your child's healthcare provider about the schedule and confirm which vaccines your child needs. Some vaccines have multiple doses and build immunity over time.³ It is important that you work with your child's healthcare provider to follow the schedule as closely as possible in order to help ensure the best protection.³



2

HOW DO VACCINES WORK?

Our immune systems fight off infection by building cells that can help find and fight the disease. Vaccines imitate this process before your baby gets sick by helping your baby's immune system develop the ability to recognize and fight the real infection in the future. By receiving all recommended doses, a child's immune system will develop the antibodies shown to help them fight disease.⁴

3

ARE VACCINES MONITORED FOR SAFETY?

According to the CDC, years of testing are required by law before a vaccine can be licensed.⁵ While side effects may occur, once in use, vaccines are continually monitored for safety. Serious side effects such as severe allergic reactions are not common.⁶ Parents should discuss any concerns with their healthcare provider, and can find more information in the CDC's "[Childhood Vaccine Assessment Tool](#)."

4

HOW DO WE KNOW THAT VACCINATION WORKS?

Vaccines are effective. Most people who get vaccinated will have immunity against the disease, according to the US Department of Health and Human Services.⁷ The CDC estimates that vaccinations in the United States helped prevent more than 21 million hospitalizations and 732,000 deaths among children born from 1994 to 2013.⁸



5

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO BEGIN VACCINATION AT BIRTH?

According to the CDC, children younger than 2 years of age are among those at risk for diseases such as measles, chickenpox, and invasive pneumococcal disease. The best way for parents to help protect their children from a number of serious infectious diseases is through vaccination. If a child misses a scheduled dose, it is important that parents reschedule missed appointments as quickly as possible so that children can get back on track with the CDC-recommended immunizations.^{2,3,9}



WHY DOES MY CHILD NEED TO BE VACCINATED IF EVERYONE ELSE HAS BEEN IMMUNIZED?

Vaccinating your child is more effective in helping to prevent disease than relying on others to get vaccinated. Recent outbreaks show us that when individuals choose not to vaccinate, children and adults are put at risk for serious vaccine-preventable disease.^{4,10}

Each year in the United States approximately 300 children die from vaccine-preventable diseases.¹¹



7

WHAT IF MY CHILD IS BEHIND ON THEIR VACCINATION SCHEDULE?

If a child misses a scheduled dose, it is important that parents reschedule missed appointments as quickly as possible, so that parents can get their children back on track with the CDC's recommended immunizations. If a child receives less than the recommended dosage, their immunity may be lowered during a time of greater risk.³ Visit the [CDC's website](#) to find recommended vaccination schedules and other tools to track your child's vaccinations.



8

WHAT CAN I DO IF MY FAMILY DOES NOT HAVE INSURANCE THAT COVERS VACCINES?

Families without vaccine insurance coverage may be eligible for vaccines at reduced or no cost through the Vaccines for Children program, or VFC.¹² Parents should also speak with their healthcare provider about getting their CDC-recommended vaccinations. Find more information at the [CDC's website](#) or call 800-CDC-INFO (232-4636) and ask for the phone number of your state's VFC coordinator.



HOW CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT VACCINATION?

If you have any questions about vaccines or are unsure whether a certain vaccine is right for your child, it's important to talk to your child's doctor right away. More information can be found on the websites for the [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov) and the [American Academy of Pediatrics](https://www.aap.org).

References: **1.** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Achievements in public health, 1900–1999: Control of infectious diseases. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep.* 1999;48(29):621-629. **2.** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2022 recommended immunizations for children from birth through 6 years old. Updated February 12, 2022. Accessed March 22, 2022. <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/downloads/parent-ver-sch-0-6yrs.pdf> **3.** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Infant Immunizations FAQs. Accessed March 22, 2022. https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niiw/ed-resources/downloads/f_provider-qa-color.pdf **4.** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Parent's guide to childhood immunizations, Part 3: How vaccines work. Updated September 24, 2020. Accessed March 22, 2022. <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/tools/parents-guide> **5.** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The Journey of Your Child's Vaccine. Updated January 26, 2018. Accessed March 22, 2022. <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/infographics/journey-of-child-vaccine.html> **6.** McNeil MM. Vaccine-associated anaphylaxis. *Curr Treat Options Allergy.* 2019;6(3):297-308. doi:10.1007/s40521-019-00215-0 **7.** US Department of Health and Human Services. Vaccines work. Reviewed February 9, 2022. Accessed March 22, 2022. <https://www.vaccines.gov/basics/work> **8.** Whitney CG, Zhou F, Singleton J, Schuchat A. Benefits from immunization during the vaccines for children program era – United States, 1994-2013. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep.* 2014;63(16):352-355. **9.** Immunization Action Coalition. When do infants and children need vaccines? Updated March 22, 2022. Access April 25, 2021. <https://vaccineinformation.org/infants-children/schedules.asp> **10.** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. What would happen if we stopped vaccinations? Accessed March 22, 2022. <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vac-gen/whatifstop.htm> **11.** US Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2020. Immunization and infectious disease. Updated February 6, 2022. Accessed March 22, 2022. <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/immunization-and-infectious-diseases> **12.** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Did you know your child can get free vaccines? Accessed March 22, 2022. <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/vfc/parents/qa-flyer.pdf>