

HealthyActions

Achieving Your Goals for Healthy Living



Stay Healthy: A Parent's Immunization Guide to Protecting Your Child

Did You Know? Before there were vaccines (shots), whooping cough killed thousands of children in the United States every year.¹

What About Side Effects?

Your child may have mild side effects from a shot. These may include soreness where the shot was given or a low-grade fever. Serious reactions are very rare. Your child is far more likely to be harmed by diseases than by the shots that prevent them.

Protect Your Child from Serious Diseases

As a parent, your job is to protect your child. You can do that by making sure your child gets immunized.

Immunizations will protect your child from serious illnesses now and in the future. Preventing diseases is always better than having to treat them.

Immunization

Becoming immune to (protected from) a disease. Immunizations are usually vaccinations. They are also called vaccines or shots.

How Do Immunizations Work?

Immunizations strengthen your body's immune system. They help protect you from some diseases. Here's how they work.

A weak form of the disease germ is injected into your body. Your body makes antibodies to fight the germ. The antibodies stay there. If the actual disease germ ever gets into your body, the antibodies destroy it. You do not get the disease.

Immune system

Protects your body from germs, bacteria, and viruses. Also protects against cancer cells.

Antibodies Fight germs.

Your child will usually get more than one dose of each vaccine. Follow the doctor's schedule to give your child the best protection against diseases.

What Diseases Do Vaccines Protect Your Child From?

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| ■ Rubella (ru-bell-uh) | ■ Measles |
| ■ Varicella (vair-uh-sell-uh) (chickenpox) | ■ Mumps |
| ■ Diphtheria (dif-theer-ee-uh) | ■ Polio |
| ■ Rotavirus (ro-tuh-virus) | ■ Hepatitis A |
| ■ Pertussis (purr-tuss-us) (whooping cough) | ■ Hepatitis B |
| ■ Haemophilus (huh-maw-full-us) influenza type b | ■ Influenza (flu) |
| ■ Pneumococcal (new-mo-cockle) disease | ■ Tetanus (lockjaw) |



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Myths & Facts About Vaccines

There are many myths about vaccines. To protect your child, you need to know the facts.

Myth^{2,3}

Facts^{2,3}

Diseases are going away, so vaccines are not needed.

Many diseases are becoming rare in the United States. Travelers from other countries can carry diseases into our country. If we stop immunizing, the diseases will come back.

Most diseases are not serious, so vaccines are not needed.

Many of the diseases are serious. They can cause death. Chickenpox is usually not serious. But every year, about 9,000 people are in the hospital for chickenpox.

Getting diseases is better than getting vaccines.

Diseases can cause paralysis (loss of movement), mental changes, cancer, deafness, blindness, or even death. Serious reactions to vaccines are very rare.

Vaccines are not safe.

Vaccines are created and tested over many years. They are licensed by the government only when they are effective and safe. Every batch is tested for safety. Side effects are watched. Serious side effects are reported.

Vaccines can cause:
SIDS (sudden death with no known cause)
Autism (a condition where a person cannot relate well to others)

Many studies have been done. There is no evidence that vaccines cause SIDS, autism, or other serious conditions. A child may get a vaccine. He may then be diagnosed with autism. This does not mean the vaccine caused the autism.

Getting many shots at once is too hard on a child's immune system.

History has shown that some shots can be given safely at the same time. This means fewer office visits and fewer shots.

Babies are too young to get shots.

Many diseases can affect babies the most. A child's body may not be strong enough to fight the diseases. That's why you should not wait to get your child immunized.

Breastfed babies are protected from serious diseases.

Breastfed babies may have fewer colds. But breastfeeding will not protect your child from many serious diseases. Vaccines will.

References

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3. American Academy of Pediatrics. "Common Myths about Immunizations." Available at: http://www.cispimmunize.org/fam/fam_main.html?http&&www.cispimmunize.org/fam/myths.html. Accessed June 22, 2007.



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