

Communication Toolkit: Babies & Young Children



Updated 8/7/2017

Vaccines give parents the safe, proven power to protect their children from serious diseases. Parents can provide the best protection by following the recommended immunization schedule – giving their child the vaccines they need, when they need them.

Babies receive vaccinations that help protect them from 14 diseases by age 2. It is very important that babies receive all doses of each vaccine and receive each vaccination on time. After age 2, children are still recommended to receive a yearly flu vaccine. Children are also due for additional doses of some vaccines between [4 and 6 years of age](#). Following the recommended immunization schedule is one of the most important things parents can do to protect their children’s health. If a child falls behind the recommended immunizations schedule, vaccines can still be given to “catch-up” the child before adolescence.

Child care facilities, preschool programs, and schools are prone to outbreaks of infectious diseases. Children in these settings can easily spread illnesses to one another due to poor hand washing, not covering their coughs, and other factors such as interacting in crowded environments.

When children are not vaccinated, they are at increased risk for disease and can spread disease to others in their play groups, child care centers, classrooms, and communities – including babies who are too young to be fully vaccinated and people with weakened immune systems due to cancer or other health conditions.

Contents

Sample Key Messages	3
Vaccine Information	8
Sample News Release	15
Ready-to-Publish Articles	17
Sample Facebook Posts	25
Sample Tweets	28
Immunization Schedule	30
Web Links & Resources	31

Sample Key Messages

Use key messages as the basis for talking points, presentations, media interviews, news releases, social media messages or other outreach materials. Localize and tailor your messages with information or stories from your own organization or community.

Vaccines give parents the safe, proven power to protect their children from 14 serious diseases before they turn 2 years old.

- Vaccinating your children according to the recommended schedule is one of the best ways you can protect them from 14 harmful and potentially deadly diseases like measles and whooping cough (pertussis) before their second birthday.
- Children who don't receive recommended vaccines are at risk of (1) getting the disease or illness and (2) having a severe case of the disease or illness. You can't predict or know in advance if an unvaccinated child will get a vaccine-preventable disease, nor can you predict or know how severe the illness will be or become.
- Vaccines don't just protect your child. Immunization is a shared responsibility. Families, health care professionals and public health officials must work together to help protect the entire community – especially babies who are too young to be vaccinated themselves.

Most parents choose the safe, proven protection of vaccines and vaccinate their children according to the recommended immunization schedule.

- Estimates from a CDC nationally representative childhood vaccine communications poll (August 2016 online poll) suggest that almost 9 out of 10 people vaccinate according to schedule or are intending to do so.

It's easy to think of these as diseases of the past. Most young parents in the United States have never seen the devastating effects that diseases like measles or whooping cough can have on a family or community. But the truth is they still exist.

- Many vaccine-preventable diseases are still common in many parts of the world. For example, measles is brought into the United States by unvaccinated travelers who are infected while in other countries. When measles gets into communities of unvaccinated people in the United States (such as people who refuse vaccines for religious, philosophical or personal reasons), outbreaks are more likely to occur.

- The 2015 measles outbreak and the current measles outbreak in Minnesota are examples of how quickly infectious diseases can spread when they reach groups of people who aren't vaccinated.
- Since measles was declared eliminated in the United States in 2000, the annual number of people reported to have measles ranged from a low of 37 people in 2004 to a high of 667 people from 27 states in 2014. From January 1 to May 20 2017, 100 people from 11 states were reported to have measles.
- Outbreaks of whooping cough have also occurred in the United States over the past few years. There are many factors contributing to the recent increase in whooping cough, but getting vaccinated is the best way to help prevent whooping cough and its complications.

Vaccines are recommended throughout our lives. Following the recommended schedule offers the best protection.

- Vaccines offer the best protection against many devastating illnesses. Following the recommended immunization schedule is the best way to ensure your children are protected from deadly diseases.
- Some vaccines require multiple doses to build enough immunity to prevent disease, boost immunity that has faded over time, ensure people who did not get immunity from a first dose are protected, or protect against diseases, like the flu, which can change from one season to the next.
- Children do not receive any known benefits from following schedules that delay vaccines. We do know that delaying vaccines puts children at known risk of becoming ill with vaccine-preventable diseases. Infants and young children who follow immunization schedules that spread out shots – or leave out shots – are at risk of developing diseases during the time that shots are delayed.
- If a young child falls behind the recommended schedule, parents and health care professionals should use the [catch-up immunization schedule](#) to quickly get the child up to date, reducing the amount of time the child is left vulnerable to vaccine-preventable diseases.

Talk to your doctor or other health care professional to make sure your children get the vaccinations they need when they need them.

- Health care professionals are parents' most trusted source of information about vaccines for their children. They play a critical role in supporting parents in understanding and choosing vaccines.

- Parents are encouraged to talk to their health care professionals about their vaccine-related questions and concerns. Parents who want more information about vaccines can learn more at CDC’s vaccine website for parents: www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents.
- Families who need help paying for childhood vaccines should ask their health care professional about the Vaccines for Children program, which provides vaccines at no cost to eligible children who do not otherwise have access to recommended childhood vaccines.
- Parents should check their child’s immunization records to make sure they are up to date on all recommended vaccinations. Parents with questions are encouraged to talk with their child’s health care professional to see if any catch-up doses are needed.

Vaccines are very safe.

- Vaccines are thoroughly tested before licensing and carefully monitored after they are licensed to ensure they are very safe.
- Vaccines are the safest and most cost-effective way to prevent several diseases. They not only protect vaccinated individuals but also help protect entire communities by preventing and reducing the spread of infectious diseases.
- Currently the United States has the safest vaccine supply in its history. The country’s long-standing vaccine safety system ensures vaccines are as safe as possible. *(More about vaccine safety on page 12.)*

Protecting your children from preventable diseases will help keep them healthy and in school.

- Vaccines are the safest and most cost-effective ways to prevent several diseases.
- When a child comes down with a disease such as whooping cough, chickenpox or the flu, he or she may miss a lot of school. A parent or caregiver will also need to stay home to provide care and make trips to the doctor.
- Schools are a prime place for transmitting vaccine-preventable diseases and school-age children can further spread disease to their families and others with whom they come in contact.

About Measles

Measles is a serious respiratory disease caused by a virus.

- Measles starts with a fever. Soon after, it causes a cough, runny nose, and red eyes. Then a rash of tiny, red spots breaks out.

- The rash starts at the head and spreads to the rest of the body. The rash can last for a week.

Measles is highly contagious.

- Measles spreads through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It is so contagious that if one person has it, 9 out of 10 people around him or her will also become infected if they are not protected.
- You can get measles just by being in a room where a person with measles has been, even up to two hours after that person has left.
- An infected person can spread measles to others even before he or she develops symptoms – from four days before they develop the measles rash to four days afterward.

Measles can cause serious health complications, such as pneumonia and encephalitis, and death.

- Some people are at high risk for severe illness and complications from measles, including children younger than 5 years of age, adults older than 20 years of age, pregnant women, and people with weakened immune systems.
- Ear infections occur in about one out of every 10 children with measles and can result in permanent hearing loss.
- As many as one out of every 20 children with measles gets pneumonia, the most common cause of death from measles in young children.
- About one child out of every 1,000 who gets measles will develop encephalitis (swelling of the brain) that can lead to convulsions and can leave the child deaf or with intellectual disability.
- For every 1,000 children who get measles, one or two will die of the disease.

Measles cases continue to be brought into the United States by people who get infected while in other countries.

- Since 2000, when measles was declared eliminated from the U.S., the annual number of people reported to have measles ranged from a low of 37 people in 2004 to a high of 667 people in 2014.
- The majority of measles cases brought into the United States are among U.S. residents, and when vaccination status is known, almost all are unvaccinated.
- Anyone who is not protected against measles is at risk of getting the disease, especially when traveling abroad.

The best protection against measles is MMR vaccine.

- MMR vaccine provides long-lasting protection against all strains of measles. Make sure you're up to date on MMR and other vaccinations.
- Children should receive two doses of MMR vaccine – the first dose at 12 through 15 months of age, and the second dose at 4 through 6 years of age. Giving the second dose of the vaccine earlier is allowed at any time as long as it is at least 28 days after the first dose.
- Unless they have evidence of measles immunity, college and other students, health care personnel, and international travelers need two appropriately spaced doses. Other adults need one dose. Ask your health care provider if you have questions about whether you need MMR vaccine.
- People who received two doses of MMR vaccine as children according to the U.S. vaccination schedule are considered protected for life.
- For those who travel internationally, CDC recommends all U.S. residents older than 6 months be protected from measles and receive MMR vaccine, if needed, prior to departure.

The MMR vaccine has a long record of safety.

- FDA and CDC continually monitor MMR vaccine safety.
- While MMR vaccines are safe, side effects can occur. The most common side effects are mild (redness, swelling, tenderness from the shot). Serious side effects are extremely rare.

Vaccine Information

Use specific vaccine information to update existing materials or develop new materials to educate people about vaccines and their importance. Check the childhood immunization schedule for all recommended vaccines from birth through age 6: [/www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/easy-to-read/child-easyread.html](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/easy-to-read/child-easyread.html). You can also find fact sheets for each vaccine-preventable disease at: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/conversations/prevent-diseases/provider-resources-factsheets-infants.html>.

Hep B

RV

DTaP

Hib

PCV13

IPV

Flu

MMR

Varicella

Hep A

Vaccine Safety

Hep B vaccine protects against hepatitis B.

Doctors recommend children get three doses of the hepatitis B shot for best protection. Typically, children need one dose at each of the following ages: birth, 1 through 2 months, and 6 through 18 months.

- **Hepatitis B** is spread by contact with bodily fluids from an infected person; for example, hepatitis B can be passed from an infected mother to her baby at birth.
 - Symptoms: There may be no symptoms, or there may be fever, headache, weakness, vomiting, jaundice (yellowing of skin and eyes), or joint pain.
 - Complications: liver damage, liver failure, liver cancer.

RV vaccine protects against rotavirus.

Two brands of rotavirus vaccines are available to protect infants against rotavirus: Rotarix (given in two doses) and RotaTeq (given in three doses). Rotavirus vaccine is given by putting some drops in an infant's mouth. Infants should get rotavirus vaccine starting at 2 months of age. For both vaccine brands, infants should get a second dose at 4 months. If getting RotaTeq, infants need a third dose at 6 months.

- **Rotavirus** spreads easily among infants and young children.
 - The virus can be found in the stool (feces) of people who are infected with the virus. It can spread when a child puts something with rotavirus on it, such as their hand or a toy, in their mouth. Children can also get

infected by consuming food and liquids that have been contaminated with rotavirus.

- Symptoms: severe watery diarrhea, fever, and vomiting. This can lead to dehydration and require hospitalization.

DTaP vaccine protects against diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis (whooping cough).

Doctors recommend children get five doses of the DTaP vaccine for best protection. Children need one dose at each of the following ages: 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 15 through 18 months, and 4 through 6 years. If a child falls behind schedule on this vaccine series, he or she will receive the Tdap vaccine if he or she is older than 6 years old when completing the series. DTaP is not licensed for children over 6 years of age. Tdap provides protection against the same diseases as DTaP.

- **Diphtheria** spreads through the air and direct contact with an infected person.
 - Symptoms: sore throat, fever, weakness, sore glands in neck.
 - Complications: swelling of the heart muscle, heart failure, coma, paralysis, death.
- **Tetanus** spreads from exposure through cuts in the skin.
 - Symptoms: stiffness in jaw, neck and abdominal muscles, difficulty swallowing, muscle spasms, fever.
 - Complications: broken bones, breathing difficulty, death.
- **Whooping cough** spreads through the air and direct contact with a person who has whooping cough.
 - Symptoms: severe cough, low-grade fever, runny nose, apnea (pause in breathing) in babies.
 - Complications: pneumonia (infection in the lungs), rib fractures, death.

Hib vaccine protects against *Haemophilus influenzae type b* (Hib).

Doctors recommend children get three or four doses of the Hib vaccine for best protection. Children need one dose at each of the following ages: 2 months, 4 months, 6 months (for some brands), and 12 through 15 months.

- ***Haemophilus influenzae type b*** is a bacterium that spreads through the air and direct contact with a person who has Hib.
 - Types of infection: The most common severe types of Hib disease are infections of the lungs (pneumonia), blood (bacteremia), and covering of the brain and spinal cord (meningitis).

- Symptoms of pneumonia can include fever, cough, shortness of breath, or chills. Symptoms of bacteremia can include fever, chills, excessive tiredness, or pain in the belly. Symptoms of meningitis can include fever, headache, stiff neck, nausea, or vomiting.
- Complications: brain damage, hearing loss, loss of limbs, death.

PCV13 vaccine protects against pneumococcal disease.

CDC recommends children get four doses of the pneumococcal vaccine for best protection. Children need one dose at each of the following ages: 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, and 12 through 15 months.

- **Pneumococcus** is a bacterium spread through the air and direct contact with an infected person.
 - Types of infection: Pneumococcus bacteria can lead to infections of the lungs (pneumonia), lining of the brain and spinal cord (meningitis), blood (bacteremia), ears, and sinuses.
 - Symptoms of pneumonia can include fever, chills, difficulty breathing, or chest pain. Symptoms of meningitis can include fever, headache, stiff neck, or confusion. Symptoms of bacteremia can include fever, chills, or low alertness. Symptoms of middle ear infections can include ear pain, a red, swollen ear drum, fever, or sleepiness. Symptoms of sinus infections can include headache, stuffy or runny nose, or facial pain or pressure.
 - Complications: brain damage, hearing loss, loss of limbs, death.

IPV vaccine protects against polio.

Children should get four doses of inactivated polio vaccine (also called IPV) for best protection. Children need one dose at each of the following ages: 2 months, 4 months, 6 through 18 months, and 4 through 6 years.

- **Polio** spreads through contact with the stool of an infected person and, though less common, through droplets from a sneeze or cough. If you get stool or droplets from an infected person on your hands and you touch your mouth, you can get infected. Also, if you put objects that have stool or droplets on them into your mouth, you can get infected.
 - Symptoms: Most people with poliovirus infection will not have visible symptoms. About 1 out of 4 people with poliovirus infection will have flu-like symptoms, such as sore throat, fever, tiredness, nausea, headache, and stomach pain. A smaller proportion of people with poliovirus infection will develop other more serious symptoms, such as paralysis which can lead to permanent disability and death.

Flu vaccine protects against influenza.

Doctors recommend children get a flu vaccine every year starting when they are 6 months old. Some children 6 months through 8 years of age may need two doses for best protection.

- **Influenza** is spread through the air and direct contact with a person who has influenza.
 - Symptoms: fever, muscle pain, sore throat, cough, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headaches, and extreme fatigue. Vomiting and diarrhea are more common in children than adults.
 - Complications: pneumonia (infection in the lungs), bronchitis, sinus and ear infections, worsening of chronic health problems.

MMR vaccine protects against measles, mumps and rubella.

Doctors recommend that children get two doses of the MMR shot for best protection. Children need one dose at each of the following ages: 12 through 15 months and 4 through 6 years. Infants 6 months to 11 months old need one dose of MMR vaccine before traveling abroad.

- **Measles** is spread through the air through coughing and sneezing.
 - Symptoms: rash, fever, cough, runny nose, and red, watery eyes.
 - Complications: deafness, pneumonia (infection in the lungs) and encephalitis (brain swelling due to infection).
- **Mumps** is spread through the air through coughing, sneezing, and talking, and also through sharing items, such as cups or eating utensils, with others, and touching objects or surfaces that are then touched by others.
 - Symptoms: swollen salivary glands (under the jaw), fever, headache, muscle aches, tiredness, and loss of appetite.
 - Complications: inflammation of testicles or ovaries, meningitis (infection of the covering around the brain and spinal cord), encephalitis (brain swelling), deafness.
- **Rubella (German Measles)** is spread through the air through coughing and sneezing.
 - Symptoms: Children infected with rubella virus sometimes have fever, sore throat, and a rash.
 - Complications: very serious in pregnant women – can lead to miscarriage; stillbirth; birth defects, such as heart problems, loss of hearing and eyesight; intellectual disability; and liver or spleen damage.

Varicella vaccine protects against chickenpox.

Children get two doses of the chickenpox vaccine for best protection. Children need one dose at each of the following ages: 12 through 15 months and 4 through 6 years.

- **Chickenpox** spreads primarily by touching or breathing in the virus particles that come from chickenpox blisters and possibly from infected respiratory droplets.
 - Symptoms: rash, itching, tiredness, headache, high fever.
 - Complications: infected blisters, bleeding problems, encephalitis (brain swelling due to infection), pneumonia (infection in the lungs).
 - People can die from chickenpox.

Hepatitis A vaccine protects against hepatitis A.

Doctors recommend children get two doses of the hepatitis A shot for best protection. Children need the first dose at 12 through 23 months and the second dose 6 to 18 months after the first.

- **Hepatitis A** is usually spread when a person ingests fecal matter from contact with objects, food, or drinks contaminated by feces or stool from an infected person.
 - Symptoms: Symptoms are more likely to occur in adults than in children, but not everyone has symptoms. If symptoms develop, there may be fever, vomiting, stomach pain, diarrhea, loss of appetite, joint pain, fatigue, jaundice (yellowing of skin or eyes), dark urine, or grey-colored stools.
 - Complications: liver failure and death, although rare and occurs more commonly in people older than 50 and people with other liver diseases.

Vaccines are the safest and most effective way to protect children from several diseases.

All vaccines used in the United States require extensive safety testing before they are licensed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

- FDA and CDC work with doctors and other health care professionals throughout the United States to monitor the safety of vaccines.
- Scientists and health care professionals use several systems to monitor the safety of vaccines after they are licensed and used in the United States.
- These systems can monitor side effects already known to be caused by vaccines, as well as detect rare side effects that were not identified during a vaccine's clinical trials.
- The United States' long-standing vaccine safety system ensures that vaccines are as safe as possible. As new information and science become available, this system is, and will continue to be, updated and improved.

To see CDC's Vaccine Safety Infographic, visit:
www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/infographics/journey-of-child-vaccine.html

THE JOURNEY of YOUR CHILD'S VACCINE

Before a new vaccine is ever given to people, extensive lab testing is done that can take several years. Once testing in people begins, it can take several more years before clinical studies are complete and the vaccine is licensed.

HOW A NEW VACCINE IS DEVELOPED, APPROVED AND MANUFACTURED

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) sets rules for the three phases of clinical trials to ensure the safety of the volunteers. Researchers test vaccines with adults first.

PHASE 1

20-100
Healthy
Adults

Is the vaccine safe?
Does this vaccine seem to work?
Are there any serious side effects?
How is the size of the dose related to side effects?

PHASE 2

several hundred
VOLUNTEERS

What are the most common short-term side effects?
How are the volunteers' immune systems responding to the vaccine?

PHASE 3

HUNDREDS or THOUSANDS
of VOLUNTEERS

How do people who get the vaccine and people who do not get the vaccine compare?
Is the vaccine effective?
Is the vaccine safe?
What are the most common side effects?

FDA licenses the vaccine only if:

- It's safe and effective
- Benefits outweigh risks

Vaccines are made in batches called lots.

Manufacturers must test all lots to make sure they are safe, pure and potent. The lots can only be released once FDA reviews their safety and quality.

The FDA inspects manufacturing facilities regularly to ensure quality and safety.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [HTTP://WWW.FDA.GOV/CBER](http://www.fda.gov/cber)

If the FDA licenses a vaccine, experts may consider adding it to the recommended immunization schedule.

HOW A VACCINE IS ADDED TO THE U.S. RECOMMENDED IMMUNIZATION SCHEDULE

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) is a group of medical and public health experts. Members of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) are among some of the groups that also bring related immunization expertise to the committee. This group carefully reviews all available data about the vaccine from clinical trials and other studies to develop recommendations for vaccine use.

When making recommendations, ACIP considers:

- How safe is the vaccine when given at specific ages?
- How well does the vaccine work at specific ages?
- How serious is the disease this vaccine prevents?
- How many children would get the disease the vaccine prevents if we didn't have the vaccine?

ACIP recommendations are not official until the CDC Director reviews and approves them and they are published. These recommendations then become part of the United States official childhood immunization schedule.

New vaccine to protect your child against a disease is added to the schedule.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [HTTP://WWW.CDC.GOV/VACCINES](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines)

After being added to the U.S. Recommended Immunization Schedule, health experts continue to monitor the vaccine's safety and effectiveness.

HOW A VACCINE'S SAFETY CONTINUES TO BE MONITORED

FDA and CDC closely monitor vaccine safety after the public begins using the vaccine.

The purpose of monitoring is to watch for adverse events (possible side effects).

Monitoring a vaccine after it is licensed helps ensure that possible risks associated with the vaccine are identified.

VACCINE ADVERSE EVENT REPORTING SYSTEM

VAERS collects and analyzes reports of adverse events that happen after vaccination. Anyone can submit a report, including parents, patients and healthcare professionals.

VACCINE SAFETY DATALINK

Network of healthcare organizations across the U.S.

Healthcare information available for a population of over 9 million people.

Scientists use VSD to conduct studies to evaluate the safety of vaccines and determine if possible side effects are actually associated with vaccination.

Vaccine recommendations may change if safety monitoring shows that the vaccine risks outweigh the benefits (like if scientists detect a new serious side effect).

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [HTTP://WWW.CDC.GOV/VACCINESAFETY](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety)

The United States currently has the safest vaccine supply in its history. These vaccines keep children, families and communities protected from serious disease.

Sample News Release

Customize sample news releases with information, stories or events happening in your community. Submit news releases, articles or op-eds to local news and partner organizations to publish, post on websites, or share through social media. Distribute or make available electronically to key partners and decision-makers.

Word Count: ~315

A Healthy Start Begins With On-Time Vaccinations

National Immunization Awareness Month is a reminder that children need vaccines right from the start.

Immunization gives parents the safe, proven power to protect their children from 14 serious and potentially deadly diseases before age 2.

To celebrate the importance of immunizations for a healthy start and throughout our lives – and to make sure children are protected with all the vaccines they need – the [name of local organization] is joining with partners nationwide in recognizing August as National Immunization Awareness Month. The first week of the month will focus on babies and young children and emphasize a healthy start for little ones begins with on-time vaccinations.

[Insert information on any events local organization is hosting or is aware of.]

“Children who don’t receive recommended vaccines are at risk of getting the disease or illness and of having a severe case,” said [insert name of local official]. “Every dose of every vaccine is important to protect your child and others in the community from infectious diseases. Talk to your doctor or other health care professional to make sure your child is up to date on all the vaccines he or she needs.”

Today’s childhood vaccines protect against serious and potentially life-threatening diseases, including polio, measles, whooping cough, and chickenpox. There are many important reasons to make sure your child is vaccinated:

- Immunizations can protect your child from 14 serious diseases before they turn 2 years old.
- Vaccination is very safe and effective.
- Immunizations can protect others you care about.
- Immunization can save your family time and money.

- Immunization protects future generations by reducing the prevalence of serious diseases.

When children are not vaccinated, they are at increased risk and can spread diseases to others in their family and community – including babies who are too young to be fully vaccinated, and people with weakened immune systems due to cancer and other health conditions.

Parents can find out more about the recommended immunization schedule at www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents or [insert local organization website] or call [insert local organization phone number].

#

Ready-to-Publish Articles

Customize and send sample articles to state and local media outlets, or use in newsletters, blogs, or other publications. These [drop-in articles are for parents/public](#) and are available in English and Spanish.

This article is also available in Spanish:

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/partners/childhood/matte-articles-features.html#parents>

Word Count: ~ 628

Audience: Parents of babies & young children

Five Important Reasons to Vaccinate Your Child

National Immunization Awareness Month is a reminder that children need vaccines right from the start.

You want to do what is best for your children. You know about the importance of car seats, baby gates and other ways to keep them safe. But did you know that one of the best ways to protect your children is to make sure they have *all* of their vaccinations?

Immunizations can save your child's life. Because of advances in medical science, your child can be protected against more diseases than ever before. Some diseases that once injured or killed thousands of children are no longer common in the United States – primarily due to safe and effective vaccines. Polio was once America's most feared disease, causing death and paralysis across the country, but today, thanks to vaccination, there are no reports of polio in the United States.

Vaccination is very safe and effective. Vaccines are given to children only after a long and careful review by scientists, doctors, and healthcare professionals. Vaccines will involve some discomfort and may cause pain, redness, or tenderness at the site of injection, but this is minimal compared to the pain, discomfort, and trauma of the diseases these vaccines prevent. Serious side effects following vaccination, such as severe allergic reaction, are very rare. The disease-prevention benefits of getting vaccines are much greater than the possible side effects for almost all children.

Immunization protects others you care about. Children in the United States still get vaccine-preventable diseases. In fact, there has been a resurgence of whooping cough (pertussis) over the past few years. For example, more than 15,000 cases of whooping cough were provisionally reported in the United States in 2016. Each year up to 20 babies die from whooping cough in the United States. Most deaths are babies who are too young to be protected by their own vaccines.

Unfortunately, some babies are too young to be completely vaccinated and some people may not be able to receive certain vaccinations due to severe allergies, weakened immune systems from conditions like leukemia, or other reasons. To help keep them safe and protected from vaccine-preventable diseases, it is important you and your children who are able to get vaccinated are fully immunized. This not only protects your family, but also helps prevent the spread of these diseases to your friends and loved ones.

Immunizations can save your family time and money. A child with a vaccine-preventable disease can be denied attendance at schools or child care facilities. Some vaccine-preventable diseases can result in prolonged disabilities and can take a financial toll because of lost time at work and medical bills. In contrast, getting vaccinated against these diseases is a good investment and is usually covered by insurance or the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program, which is a federally funded program that provides vaccines at no cost to children from low-income families.

To find out more about the VFC program, visit www.cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/vfc/ or ask your child's health care professional.

Immunization protects future generations. Vaccines have reduced and, in some cases, eliminated many diseases that killed or severely disabled people just a few generations ago. For example, smallpox vaccination eradicated that disease worldwide. Your children don't have to get smallpox shots anymore because the disease no longer exists. By vaccinating children against rubella (German measles), the risk that pregnant women will pass this virus on to their fetus or newborn has been dramatically decreased, and birth defects associated with that virus are rare in the United States. If we continue vaccinating and according to the recommended schedule, parents in the future may be able to trust that some diseases of today will no longer be around to harm their children in the future.

For more information about the importance of infant immunization, visit www.cdc.gov/vaccines.

Ready-to-Publish Article

This article is also available in Spanish:

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/partners/childhood/matte-articles-features.html#parents>

Word Count: ~ 376

Audience: Parents of babies & young children

Make Your Child's Shots Less Stressful

National Immunization Awareness Month is a reminder that children need vaccines right from the start.

Vaccines help protect babies and young children against 14 serious diseases before their 2nd birthday. Even though you are keeping her safe from diseases, it's hard to see your child cry when she gets her shots. But you can take some steps before, during, and after a vaccine visit to ease the short-term pain and stress of getting shots.

Read about the shots your child will get in advance. "CDC has a lot of useful information to help parents understand the importance of on-time vaccination," said Dr. Candice Robinson, a pediatrician at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). "You can review this information before your appointment, and then, you can ask your child's doctor any remaining questions you have about vaccines."

You may also want to bring your child's vaccine record to show the doctor, and pack a favorite toy, book, blanket, or other comfort item to keep your child occupied at the visit. For older children, shots can pinch or sting, but not for long. Remind them that shots help keep them healthy.

Distract your child with a toy, a story, a song, or something interesting in the room. Make eye contact with your child and smile, talk softly, or sing. Hold your child tightly on your lap, if you can. Take deep breaths with an older child to help "blow out" the pain.

After the shot, hug, cuddle, and praise your child. For babies, swaddling, breastfeeding, or offering a bottle may offer quick relief. Comfort and reassure older children if they cry.

If you notice redness, soreness, or swelling from the shot, place a clean, cool washcloth on the area. These reactions are usually mild and resolve on their own without needing treatment. If your child runs a fever, try a cool sponge bath.

You can also use a non-aspirin pain reliever if your doctor says it's OK. Some children eat less, sleep more, or act fussy for a day after they get shots. Make sure your child gets plenty to drink. If you're worried about anything, call your doctor.

"Remember," added Dr. Robinson, "keeping your child up to date on vaccines is the best way to protect against vaccine-preventable diseases."

Learn more about childhood vaccines at www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents or call 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636).

Ready-to-Publish Article

This article is also available in Spanish:

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/partners/childhood/matte-articles-features.html#parents>

Word Count: ~ 446

Audience: Parents of babies & young children

Vaccinating on Time is Important for Disease Protection

National Immunization Awareness Month is a reminder that children need vaccines right from the start.

Parents agree that feeding and sleep schedules are important to help keep their children healthy. The same goes for childhood immunizations. Vaccinating children on time is the best way to protect them from 14 serious and potentially deadly diseases before their second birthday.

“The recommended immunization schedule is designed to offer protection early in life,” said Dr. Candice Robinson, a pediatrician at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), “when babies are vulnerable and before it’s likely they will be exposed to diseases.”

Public health and medical experts base their vaccine recommendations on many factors. They study information about diseases and vaccines very carefully to decide which vaccines kids should get and when they should get them for best protection.

Although the number of vaccines a child needs in the first two years of life may seem like a lot, doctors know a great deal about the human immune system, and they know that a healthy baby’s immune system can handle getting all vaccines when they are recommended.

Dr. Robinson cautions against parents delaying vaccination. “There is no known benefit to delaying vaccination. In fact, it puts babies at risk of getting sick because they are left vulnerable to catch serious diseases during the time they are not protected by vaccines.”

When parents choose not to vaccinate or to follow a delayed schedule, children are left unprotected against diseases that still circulate in this country, like measles and whooping cough.

The United States experienced a record number of measles cases during 2014, with 667 cases from 27 states reported to CDC's NCIRD. This was the greatest number of cases in the U.S. since measles was eliminated in 2000. Staying on track with the immunization schedule ensures that children have the best protection against diseases like these by age 2.

Parents who are concerned about the number of shots given at one time can reduce the number given at a visit by using the flexibility built into the recommended immunization schedule. For example, the third dose of hepatitis B vaccine can be given at 6 through 18 months of age. Parents can work with their child's health care professional to have their child get this dose at any time during that age range.

"I make sure my kids are vaccinated on time," said Dr. Amanda Cohn, a pediatrician at CDC. "Getting children all the vaccines they need by age 2 is one of the best things parents can do to help keep their children safe and healthy."

If you have questions about the childhood immunization schedule, talk with your child's doctor or nurse. For more information about vaccines, go to www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents.

Ready-to-Publish Article (For Nurses)

This article is written for direct insertion in professional newsletters, newspapers and magazines or websites that target nurses.

Word count: ~ 591

Audience: Nurses

Nurses Essential in Ensuring All Children are Protected with Immunization

National Immunization Awareness Month is a reminder that children need vaccines right from the start.

Parents consider health care professionals one of the most trusted sources for answering questions and addressing concerns about their child's health. A recent survey on parents' attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors regarding vaccines for young children – including vaccine safety and trust – found that 8 out of 10 parents consider pediatric health care professionals to be one of their most trusted sources of vaccine information. With so many parents relying on the advice of health care professionals about vaccines, a nurse's recommendation plays a key role in guiding parents' vaccination decisions.

“Because nurses are often the ones administering vaccines, it makes their expertise, knowledge, and advice vital in creating a safe and trusted environment for discussing childhood immunizations,” said [insert name of local official]. “How you communicate with parents during routine pediatric visits is critical for fostering parental confidence in the decision to vaccinate their children.”

The survey also found that 7 out of 10 parents were confident or very confident in the safety of routine childhood immunizations; however, parents had questions about vaccines. Parents' most common question is what side effects they should look for after vaccination. One out of four is concerned that children get too many vaccines in one doctor's visit and one out of five parents surveyed are concerned that vaccines may cause autism.

“Reinforcing that vaccines are safe and effective can go a long way towards assuring parents that they are doing the best thing for their children,” says Patsy Stinchfield, a pediatric nurse practitioner who represents the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners. “One of the best ways you can establish trust with parents is by asking open-ended questions to identify and address concerns they may have about vaccines. Also, restate their questions and acknowledge concerns with empathy.”

Make sure to address questions or concerns by tailoring responses to the level of detail the parent is looking for. Some parents may be prepared for a fairly high level of detail about vaccines including how they work and what diseases they prevent. Other parents may be overwhelmed by too much science and may respond better to a personal example of a patient you've seen with a vaccine-preventable disease. A strong recommendation from you as a nurse can also make parents feel comfortable with their decision to vaccinate.

For all parents, it's important to address the risks of the diseases that vaccines prevent. It's also imperative to acknowledge the risks associated with vaccines and highlight the benefits of vaccines. Parents are seeking balanced information. Never state that vaccines are risk-free, and always discuss the known side effects caused by vaccines.

If a parent chooses not to vaccinate, keep the lines of communication open and revisit their decision at a future visit. Make sure parents are aware of the risks and responsibilities they need to take on. These include informing schools and child care facilities that their child is unimmunized and staying aware of any disease outbreaks in their communities. If you build a trusting relationship over time with parents, they may reconsider their vaccination decision.

To help communicate about vaccine-preventable diseases, vaccines, and vaccine safety, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) have partnered to develop *Provider Resources for Vaccine Conversations with Parents*. These materials include vaccine safety information, fact sheets on vaccines and vaccine-preventable diseases, and strategies for successful vaccine conversations with parents. They are free and available online at www.cdc.gov/vaccines/conversations.

Sample Facebook Posts

Use these sample Facebook posts as they are—or as a starting point to customize and localize your own posts. These messages are ideally 250 characters or less to allow the entire post to be viewed in the newsfeed. Check the [Web Links and Resources](#) section on page 31 for more ideas of links you can use to illustrate or enliven your social media messages. CDC’s Guide to Writing for Social Media is a great online resource at: www.cdc.gov/socialmedia/tools/guidelines/pdf/guidetowritingforsocialmedia.pdf.

For Parents

Has your child received all the vaccines they need to protect against serious diseases? Enter your child’s birth month and year on CDC’s immunization schedule to see if they are fully protected. It’s not too late to catch up if they have missed one or more shots: <http://go.usa.gov/xqug3> #NIAM17

CDC’s parent-friendly childhood immunization schedule allows you to see what vaccines your child needs and when they need each vaccine. Stay on schedule and make sure your baby is protected from 14 serious diseases by age 2: <http://go.usa.gov/xqzJF> #NIAM17

You know vaccines protect your child against diseases, but ever wonder how they work? Learn how vaccines help your child develop immunity to diseases at CDC’s vaccine website for parents: <http://go.usa.gov/xqugJ> #NIAM17

Your baby’s well-child visits can be stressful for you and your child, but there are ways to make them easier. Get useful tips for soothing your baby when they get shots: <http://go.usa.gov/xquDw> #NIAM17

Did you know that vaccines can protect your child from 14 serious diseases? How many of these diseases can you name? Visit CDC’s vaccine website for parents to learn about these diseases, their symptoms, health risks, and how they are spread: <https://go.usa.gov/xN5Xr> #NIAM17

Most parents-to-be have questions about immunizations, and no wonder; there’s a lot to know. It’s important to get answers to your questions from an expert – your child’s doctor, local or state public health department, or CDC’s parent-friendly website on childhood vaccines: <http://go.usa.gov/xquCh> #NIAM17

Most childhood vaccines are given during baby’s first two years of life. Following the recommended vaccine schedule is the best protection you can give your child from 14

serious diseases – it’s designed to work with the infant immune system. Learn more: <http://go.usa.gov/xquCh> #NIAM17

You know vaccines protect your child against diseases, but ever wonder how they work? Parents, learn how vaccines help your child build immunity to diseases: <http://go.usa.gov/xqugJ> #NIAM17

You work hard to help keep your whole family safe and healthy. This includes vaccinating your children on time, every time. Learn more about the steps that CDC, FDA and vaccine manufacturers take to ensure that vaccines are safe and effective: <http://go.usa.gov/xqujm> #NIAM17

Is your child up to date on their shots? Enter your child’s birth month and year on CDC’s immunization schedule to see if they are fully protected. It’s not too late to catch up if they have missed one or more shots: <http://go.usa.gov/xqug3> #NIAM17

Do you know how CDC sets the recommended immunization schedule? The schedule is designed to protect school-aged children and teens by providing immunity early, before they are exposed to life-threatening diseases. Visit CDC’s vaccine website for parents to learn more: <https://go.usa.gov/xNP9V> #NIAM17

For Health Care Professionals

When it comes to vaccines, providers are a parent’s most trusted resource. Visit CDC’s website to find materials you need to have successful vaccine conversations with parents: <http://go.usa.gov/xquaQ> #NIAM17

Spending a lot of time talking to parents about vaccines? CDC, AAP and AAFP have resources to help with your vaccine conversations with parents: <http://go.usa.gov/xquaQ> #NIAM17

Do parents at your practice know what vaccines their child needs? Share this quiz to help parents learn more: <https://go.usa.gov/x5yrv> #NIAM17

Looking for valuable communication strategies for vaccine conversations with parents? A successful discussion involves two-way conversation, with both parties sharing information and asking questions. For tips on creating a successful dialogue, visit <http://go.usa.gov/xquaQ> #NIAM17

Have the CDC's childhood immunization schedule at your fingertips - visit <http://go.usa.gov/xquWh> #NIAM17

Do your patients need vaccine materials in Spanish? CDC has information about each vaccine-preventable disease and related immunizations: <https://go.usa.gov/xN592> #NIAM17

Doctors, download and print materials to help parents understand vaccine benefits and risks: <http://go.usa.gov/xquaQ> #NIAM17

Sample Tweets

Use these sample tweets as they are—or as a starting point to customize and localize your own tweets. Check the [Web Links and Resources](#) section on page 31 for more ideas of links you can use to illustrate or enliven your social media messages. CDC’s Guide to Writing for Social Media is a great online resource at:

www.cdc.gov/socialmedia/tools/guidelines/pdf/guidetowritingforsocialmedia.pdf.

For Parents

Is your child up to date on all their vaccines? Use CDC’s instant immunization schedule to find out: <http://go.usa.gov/xqug3> #NIAM17

Find tips to prepare for your baby’s next well visit & learn what vaccines they’ll need: <http://go.usa.gov/xquCh> #NIAM17

Want vaccine info based on your child’s age? <http://go.usa.gov/xquCh> #NIAM17

Need help understanding your child’s shot schedule? Here’s a version that’s easy to read: <http://go.usa.gov/xqzJF> #NIAM17

Parents, get answers to your questions about vaccines: <http://go.usa.gov/xquCh> #NIAM17

Your child can still get serious diseases like #measles & #whoopingcough. Protect them w/ vaccines: <http://go.usa.gov/xquCh> #NIAM17

Babies and kids could come into contact w/ diseases anywhere. Protect them wherever they go. <https://youtu.be/C6-oXsbfRm4> #NIAM17

Watch this baby book video and see how one little boy stays up to date on vaccines. <https://youtu.be/tyqySSFdIPA> #NIAM17

Is your baby’s next well visit coming up? Learn tips for making shots less stressful: <https://go.usa.gov/xNyD4> #NIAM17

Why are preventable disease outbreaks rare in schools now? Most parents ensure their children are up to date on vaccines. <http://go.usa.gov/xquCh> #NIAM17

For Healthcare Professionals

CDC, AAP & AAFP have vaccine resources for you to share with parents:

<http://go.usa.gov/xquaQ> #NIAM17

Do you talk w/ parents about vaccine-preventable diseases & vaccine safety? Here are conversation tools: <http://go.usa.gov/xquaQ> #NIAM17

#Vaccines help protect babies against 14 diseases by age 2. Help parents know what shots their baby needs next: <https://go.usa.gov/x5yrv>

Do parents at your practice know what #vaccines their child needs? Share this quiz to help parents learn more: <https://go.usa.gov/x5yrv>

Tell parents in your practice about CDC's website just for them: <http://go.usa.gov/xquCh> #NIAM17

Educate parents about whooping cough & the importance of DTaP & Tdap vaccines: <http://go.usa.gov/xquaQ> #NIAM17

You are parents' most trusted source of vaccine info. Here's info to support your conversations w/ parents: <http://go.usa.gov/xquaQ> #NIAM17

Have the CDC's 2017 childhood immunization schedule at your fingertips: <http://go.usa.gov/xquWh> #NIAM17

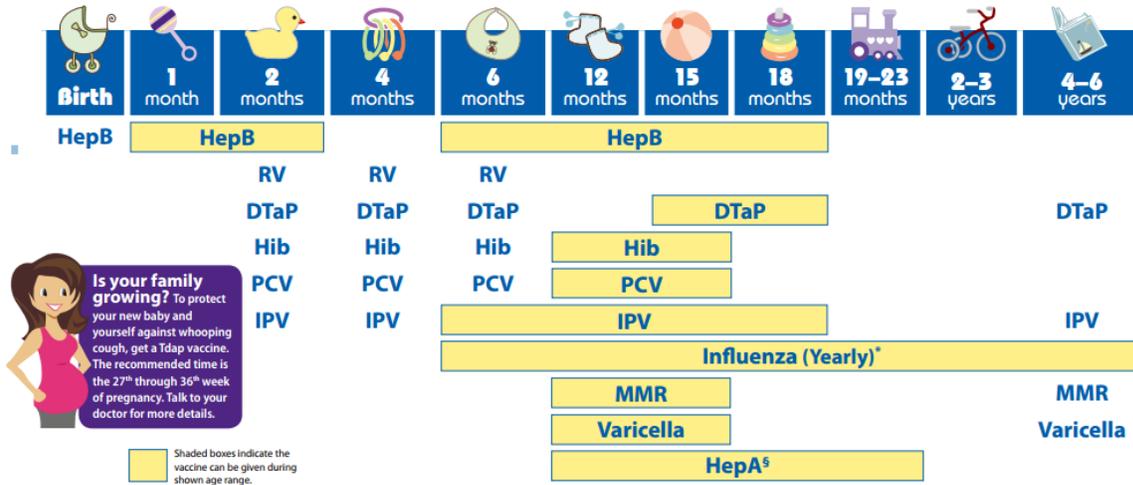
Do your patients need vaccine materials in Spanish? Share info on vaccine-preventable diseases in Espanol: <https://go.usa.gov/xN592> #NIAM17

Help parents understand vaccine benefits and risks: <http://go.usa.gov/xquaQ> #NIAM17

Immunization Schedule

Check the easy-to-read 2017 childhood immunization schedule for all recommended vaccines: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/downloads/parent-ver-sch-0-6yrs.pdf>

2017 Recommended Immunizations for Children from Birth Through 6 Years Old



NOTE: If your child misses a shot, you don't need to start over, just go back to your child's doctor for the next shot. Talk with your child's doctor if you have questions about vaccines.

FOOTNOTES:

- * Two doses given at least four weeks apart are recommended for children aged 6 months through 8 years of age who are getting an influenza (flu) vaccine for the first time and for some other children in this age group.
- § Two doses of HepA vaccine are needed for lasting protection. The first dose of HepA vaccine should be given between 12 months and 23 months of age. The second dose should be given 6 to 18 months later. HepA vaccination may be given to any child 12 months and older to protect against HepA. Children and adolescents who did not receive the HepA vaccine and are at high-risk, should be vaccinated against HepA.

If your child has any medical conditions that put him at risk for infection or is traveling outside the United States, talk to your child's doctor about additional vaccines that he may need.



For more information, call toll free **1-800-CDC-INFO** (1-800-232-4636) or visit www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



American Academy of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™

Web Links & Resources

For Parents

CDC: 2017 Immunization Schedules for Children, Adolescents and Adults

Display on your website: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/syndicate.html>

CDC: Childhood Immunization Quiz

<https://www2a.cdc.gov/vaccines/childquiz/>

CDC: Vaccine Website for Parents

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/index.html

CDC: Who Sets the Immunization Schedule?

[Learn in words and pictures about the journey of your child's vaccine](#), including how a vaccine is added to the U.S. recommended schedule.

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/vaccine-decision/sets-schedule.html>

CDC: For Parents: Immunization Schedules for Your Children

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/easy-to-read/index.html>

CDC: Facts for Parents about Vaccine Preventable Diseases

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/diseases/child/index.html>

CDC: Parent's Guide to Childhood Immunizations

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/parents-guide/default.htm

CDC: Vaccines Help Protect Travelers of All Ages

www.cdc.gov/Features/TravelProtection/

CDC: Flu Free Resources

www.cdc.gov/flu/freeresources/index.htm

CDC: 9 Things to Make Shots Less Stressful...For You and Your Baby

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/visit/less-stressful.html>

World Health Organization: What are some of the myths – and facts – about vaccination?

www.who.int/features/qa/84/en/

Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP): Vaccine Education Center
www.chop.edu/service/vaccine-education-center/home.html

American Academy of Pediatrics
www2.aap.org/immunization/index.html

National Foundation for Infectious Diseases: Prevent Childhood Influenza
www.preventchildhoodinfluenza.org

National Foundation for Infectious Diseases: Family Vaccines
www.family-vaccines.org

For Advocates and Educators

CDC: Vaccines and Immunizations
Vaccine information and resources for healthcare professionals
www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp.htm

Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP): Professional and Parent Groups
Listing:
www.chop.edu/service/vaccine-education-center/related-information/professional-and-parent-groups.html

ShotbyShot.org: Stories of Vaccine Preventable Diseases
www.shotbyshot.org

Every Child By Two (ECBT): Shot of Prevention Blog
News and Views on Vaccine
<http://shotofprevention.com/>

For Healthcare Professionals

CDC, AAP and AAFP: Provider Resources for Vaccine Conversations with Parents
www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/patient-ed/conversations/index.html

Immunization Action Coalition: Vaccine Summaries for Infants and Children
www.immunize.org/handouts/vaccine-summaries.asp

American Academy of Pediatrics: Red Book Report of the Committee on Infectious Diseases

<https://redbook.solutions.aap.org/redbook.aspx>

ACOG: Immunization Toolkit

<http://immunizationforwomen.org>

Print Ads, Posters, PSAs, Drop-In Articles, Listicles

CDC: Print Ads and Posters

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/partners/childhood/print-ads-posters.html>



CDC: Radio PSAs, TV PSAs, Videos

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/partners/childhood/multimedia.html>



CDC: “School Starts Soon—Are Your Child’s Vaccines Up To Date?” Video

www.youtube.com/watch?v=2_ueslLZ8E

CDC: Drop-In Articles & Web Features

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/partners/childhood/matte-articles-features.html>

CDC: Listicle – *9 Things to Make Vaccines Less Stressful... For You and Your Baby*
<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/visit/less-stressful.html>



CDC: Listicle – *14 Diseases You Almost Forgot About Thanks To Vaccines*
<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/diseases/child/14-diseases.html>



Animated Graphics

CDC: A Public Health Achievement: Vaccines By The Numbers

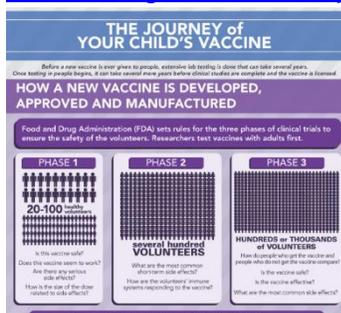
<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/partners/childhood/multimedia/animatedgraphic.html>



Infographics

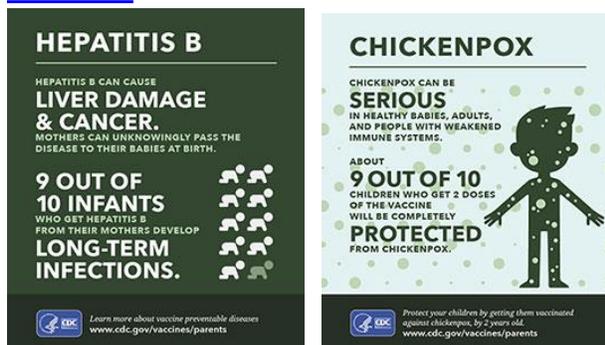
CDC: The Journey of Your Child's Vaccine

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/infographics/journey-of-child-vaccine.html



CDC: Vaccine Preventable Disease Tile Graphics

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/infographics/vaccine-preventable-disease-tiles.html>



CDC: Measles: More than just a little rash

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/diseases/child/vpd-infographics/measles.html>



CDC: Mumps: More than just swollen glands

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/diseases/child/vpd-infographics/mumps.html>



CDC: Whooping Cough: More than just a cough

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/diseases/child/vpd-infographics/whooping-cough.html>



CDC: Protecting Babies from Whooping Cough

- *English:* <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/infographics/protect-babies-from-whooping-cough.html>

- **Spanish:** <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/infographics/protect-babies-from-whooping-cough-sp.html>



Measles Resources

<http://www.cdc.gov/measles/resources/parents-caregivers.html>



- Webpages
- Fact Sheets
- FAQ Section
- Posters
- Infographics
- Video PSA

CDC: Measles Materials for Childcare Centers and Providers

www.cdc.gov/measles/resources/parents-caregivers.html

CDC: Vaccine Fact Sheets for Parents

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/conversations/resources-parents.html>

- Infant Immunization FAQs
- Vaccine When your Child Is Sick
- Combination Vaccines
- How to Hold Your Child during Vaccinations

- Tips for a Less Stressful Shot Visit
- If You Choose Not to Vaccinate Your Child, Understand the Risks and Responsibilities