

IMMUNIZATIONS

Immunizations have been protecting children from serious diseases for more than 50 years.

When your child is immunized, he receives a vaccine to prevent a certain disease. Vaccines usually are given as shots. The vaccine makes your child's body produce antibodies. These antibodies make him immune to this disease should he ever come in contact with it.

Your child should receive most of her immunizations during the first 2 years of life, starting at birth. Infants and young children are more at risk of being harmed by serious diseases. That is why it is important to begin immunizations early. Your child also will need immunizations before starting school. In addition, she will need to receive vaccines as an older child and teenager.

Today children receive more immunizations than in the past because now we can protect them from more serious diseases than ever before. Most vaccines used for routine childhood immunizations can be given safely at the same time.

Your child needs the following immunizations to stay healthy:

Hepatitis B vaccine. This protects against a virus that may cause serious liver disease, as well as cancer.

Your child needs to receive doses of hepatitis B vaccine at

- Birth to 2 months of age
- 1 to 4 months of age
- 6 to 18 months of age

Any older child or teen who has not received this vaccine can begin the series of immunizations at any time.

DTaP vaccine. This protects against diphtheria (a potentially fatal throat and windpipe infection), tetanus (lockjaw), and pertussis (whooping cough).

Most children should receive this vaccine at ages

- 2 months.
- 4 months.
- 6 months.
- 15 to 18 months.
- 4 to 6 years.

11 to 16 years, Td (tetanus and diphtheria) only. Routine Td boosters are needed every 10 years after that.

H. influenzae type b (Hib) vaccine. This protects against *Haemophilus influenzae* type b. This bacterium is a major cause of spinal meningitis, pneumonia, and other serious infections.

Your child should receive

- Two or three doses of the Hib vaccine between 2 and 6 months of age
- A booster dose at 12 to 15 months of age

Your pediatrician can tell you about different types of the Hib vaccine that are available.

Inactivated Polio (IPV) vaccine. This protects against polio, which can cause paralysis or death. This type of polio vaccine is given as a shot and is recommended for almost everyone. Your child should receive doses of polio vaccine at ages

- 2 months
- 4 months
- 6 to 18 months
- 4 to 6 years

Under certain circumstances your pediatrician may recommend that your child receive the oral polio vaccine, which is given by mouth.

Pneumococcal Conjugate vaccine

This protects against the pneumococcal bacteria, which can cause meningitis, pneumonia, and serious infections in the brain, bloodstream, and ears.

Your child needs this vaccine at ages

- 2 months
- 4 months
- 6 months
- 12 to 15 months

Some children between the ages of 2 and 5 years also may need this vaccine.

Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) vaccine

This protects against measles, mumps, and rubella (German measles).

Your child needs to receive doses of the MMR vaccine at ages

- 12 to 15 months
- 4 to 6 years

Children who do not get the second dose on schedule should receive it at the earliest opportunity.

Varicella vaccine

This protects against chickenpox, which can cause serious complications such as bacterial skin infections, pneumonia, and infections of the brain.

If your child has not had chickenpox, he should receive

- A single dose of the varicella vaccine between the ages of 15 and 18 months
- A single dose at the earliest opportunity if he is an older child (but younger than 13 years) and has not been immunized
- Two doses of the vaccine at least 4 weeks apart, if he is older than 13 years of age and has never been immunized

Hepatitis A vaccine

This protects against a virus that causes liver disease. Hepatitis A virus can be spread from person to person or through contaminated food or water. Hepatitis A vaccine may be given to children in 2 doses 6 months apart to children 2 years of age and older.

Make sure your child is protected

It is important to keep track of your child's immunizations and make sure that your child receives each vaccine on time. Children who lag behind on getting their shots are at risk of getting very sick. They also may spread serious diseases to other people.

Keep a chart that shows each immunization that your child has received. Put that chart in a safe place where you can refer to it. Records can always be obtained from our office if desired.

Vaccine doses that are not given at the recommended age should be given as a 'catch-up' immunization at a later time. Ask your pediatrician if your child's immunizations are up-to-date.

There are some groups of people who should not receive certain vaccines. Those groups may include people with certain allergies or weakened immune systems. Your pediatrician can tell you which vaccines your child should have.

Immunizations are one of the most important ways you can protect your child against serious diseases. Much information is available about immunizations. Your pediatrician can tell you the facts.

Talk with your pediatrician about the vaccines your child needs to stay healthy.

Immunizations are safe and effective

Reactions to vaccines may occur, but they are usually mild. Severe reactions to vaccines are very rare. Children are much more likely to be harmed by serious diseases than by immunizations. Your pediatrician may recommend acetaminophen for common side effects such as irritability and fever. If you have questions about possible reactions, call your pediatrician

Immunization Schedule Followed in Our Office

Birth	Hepatitis B
1 Month	Hepatitis B
2 Months	DTaP, Hib, Polio, and Pevnar
4 Months	DTaP, Hib, Polio, and Pevnar
6 Months	DTaP, Hib, Polio, and Pevnar
9 Months	Hepatitis B
12 Months	Hib, MMR, and Pevnar,
15 Months	DTaP, and Varivax
18 Months	No Shots
24 Months	Hepatitis A
Yearly	Influenza