

# IMMUNIZATIONS, CHILDHOOD

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## BASIC INFORMATION

### PROTECTING YOUR CHILD AGAINST SERIOUS DISEASE

It's important that children get vaccinated (get their "shots") so they don't get childhood diseases. Your child can be vaccinated at the doctor's office or your local health department. Keep a list of the shots your child has received so that you have records for school and so you'll know if your child needs more shots.

### VACCINES THAT ARE AVAILABLE

- Diphtheria.
- Whooping cough (pertussis).
- Tetanus.
- Polio.
- Measles.
- Mumps.
- German measles (rubella).
- Chickenpox (varicella).
- Hepatitis A and hepatitis B.
- HIB (*haemophilus influenzae* type B).
- *Pneumococcal* diseases.
- Influenza.

(Some of these vaccines are being combined into single shots. Ask your health care provider.)

- In most of the United States, many of these vaccinations are required for school or day-care. The first shots for most of these illnesses should be given when the child is still a baby. This is important because most of the diseases these vaccines protect your child against can be serious or even deadly.
- Like any medicine, vaccines carry a small risk of serious harm such as a severe allergic reaction. But side effects from shots are usually mild and last only a short time. Some children have no side effects at all. None of the possible side effects should keep your child from getting shots unless your doctor says so.
- Be sure to tell your doctor if anyone in your immediate family has ever had a bad reaction to a vaccine, and ask if there are certain conditions under which vaccination is not recommended. Also talk to your doctor about whether certain reactions to vaccines can be controlled, such as by giving your child acetaminophen or ibuprofen before or after vaccination.

### VACCINATIONS, THE RECOMMENDED AGE TO GET THEM AND POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS:

#### DTaP

- Protects against: Diphtheria, whooping cough (pertussis), and tetanus. The vaccines against these three diseases are combined in a single shot. The single shot may also include the polio and hepatitis B vaccine.
- Diphtheria is a serious infection of the throat, mouth, and nose, which can lead to suffocation, pneumonia, heart failure, and paralysis.

• A child who catches whooping cough develops a bad cough that sounds like a "whoop." The severe coughing can interfere with eating, drinking, and breathing. Whooping cough can be life-threatening, especially in children younger than 1 year old.

• Tetanus is caused by germs in dirt and rusty metal that get into the body through a cut. Tetanus attacks the jaw muscles first, often causing lockjaw. It can also affect the muscles used to breathe. It causes death in 3 out of 10 people who get it.

• Ages to get vaccine: Shot is given at 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, and 15-18 months, with a booster given between the ages of 4 and 6 years. After that, everyone should get a tetanus booster every 10 years throughout life.

• Possible side effects include: Fever, soreness where shot is given, and irritability. In rare cases, the shot can cause very high fever and convulsions.

#### POLIO

• Protects against: Polio, a virus that can cause paralysis and death. There are two kinds of polio vaccines: the inactivated polio virus (IPV), which is the shot recommended in the United States today, and a live, oral polio virus (OPV). OPV causes polio in a few people and it is believed that using OPV is no longer worth the slight risk, except in limited cases. IPV does not cause polio.

• Ages to get vaccine: Shot is usually given at 2 months, 4 months, 6-18 months, and at 4-6 years. This vaccine may be combined with other vaccines.

• Possible side effects include: The main side effect of IPV is soreness where the shot is given.

#### MMR

• Protects against: Measles, mumps, and German measles (rubella). The vaccines against these three diseases are combined in a single shot.

• Measles is easy to catch and causes a rash, high fever, and cough. Measles can also cause hearing loss, convulsions, brain damage, and death.

• Mumps makes the saliva glands under the jaws swell and hurt. It also usually causes fever and headache and can have serious complications. It is even more painful for teen-age boys, whose testicles may swell.

• German measles is mild in children but can damage the unborn baby if a woman gets it while pregnant.

• Ages to get vaccine: One shot is given at 12-15 months and another is usually given at 4-6 years. Women who do not know if they are immune to rubella can be tested to see if they are. If they have no immunity they should get the rubella vaccine more than three months before they plan to get pregnant.

• Possible side effects include: Pain where the shot is given and a rash. The shot can also cause swollen glands or mild joint pain, but these are rare.

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## CHICKENPOX

- Protects against: Chickenpox, which is usually a mild disease that causes an itchy rash and fever. Some children experience serious complications.
- Ages to get vaccine: One shot is given between the ages of 12 months and 12 years. It is recommended that children receive the shot at 12 to 18 months of age. Adults and adolescents older than 13 who have not had chickenpox get two shots, at least 4–8 weeks apart.
- Possible side effects include: Pain where the shot is given, rash, or fever.

## HEPATITIS A

- Protects against: Hepatitis A, a disease of the liver caused by the hepatitis A virus. It can be mild to severe.
- Ages to get vaccine: For children 2 years or older. Two doses are needed, the second dose given 6–18 months after the first. The vaccine is recommended for children in select areas of the United States.
- Possible side effects include: Pain or swelling where the shot is given, fatigue, or mild fever.

## HEPATITIS B

- Protects against: Hepatitis B, a disease of the liver caused by the hepatitis B virus. It can cause lifelong liver problems or death.
- Ages to get vaccine: For babies, three shots are given before 18 months of age. Older children, adolescents, and adults who didn't get the shot as babies can get the first shot any time, a second shot 1–2 months later, and a third shot 4–6 months after the first shot. This vaccine may be combined with other vaccines.
- Possible side effects include: Soreness where the shot is given and fever.

## HIB

- Protects against: *Haemophilus influenzae* type b, an infection that can seriously harm a child's brain, blood, bones, throat, and the area around the heart.
- Ages to get vaccine: Shot is given at 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, and 12–15 months.
- Possible side effects include: Soreness where the shot is given and fever.

## PNEUMOCOCCAL CONJUGATE

- Protects against: Invasive pneumococcal diseases, which can cause brain damage and death.
- Ages to get vaccine: Shot is given at 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, and 12 to 15 months.
- Possible side effects include: Soreness where the shot is given and mild fever.

## INFLUENZA VACCINE

- Protects against: Influenza ("flu"), which is a virus that spreads from infected persons to the nose or throat of others. It can be mild to severe, and may be fatal.
- Ages to get vaccine: Shot given each year to children ages 6 months and 2 years.
- Possible side effects include: Soreness, redness, or swelling where the shot is given, fever, and aches. In rare cases, an allergic reaction may occur.

## RECOMMENDED IMMUNIZATION SCHEDULE

### Hepatitis B

- 1st dose Birth–2 months
- 2nd dose 1 month–4 months
- 3rd dose 6 months–18 months
- catch-up 11–12 years

### Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (DTaP)

- 1st dose 2 months
- 2nd dose 4 months
- 3rd dose 6 months
- 4th dose 15 months–18 months
- 5th dose 4–6 years

### Tetanus, Diphtheria (Td)

- 11–12 years; 13–18 years

### H. influenzae type b (HIB)

- 1st dose 2 months
- 2nd dose 4 months
- 3rd dose 6 months
- 4th dose 12 months–15 months

### Inactivated Poliovirus (Polio)

- 1st dose 2 months
- 2nd dose 4 months
- 3rd dose 6 months–18 months
- 4th dose 4–6 years

### Pneumococcal Conjugate

- 1st dose 2 months
- 2nd dose 4 months
- 3rd dose 6 months
- 4th dose 12 months–15 months

### Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)

- 1st dose 12 months–15 months
- 2nd dose 4–6 years
- catch-up 11–12 years

### Varicella (chickenpox)

- 1st dose 12 months–18 months
- catch-up 11–12 years

### Hepatitis A (in selected areas of the United States)

- 1 dose 24 months–14–18 years

### Influenza ("flu")

- 1 dose 6 months–2 years (each year)

Note: Temporary shortages of some vaccines may occur. The vaccine schedule may change until the shortage is corrected. Your child's health care provider will explain how a vaccine shortage affects your child.



## NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

You have any questions about childhood vaccinations.

Special notes:

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