

Be Wise Immunize Your Children

At birth, infants have protection against certain diseases because antibodies have passed through the placenta from the mother to the unborn child. After birth, [breastfed](#) babies get the continued benefits of additional antibodies in breast milk. But in both cases, the protection is temporary.

Immunization (vaccination) is a way of creating immunity to certain diseases by using small amounts of a killed or weakened microorganism that causes the particular disease.







Microorganisms can be viruses, such as the measles virus, or they can be bacteria, such as *pneumococcus*. Vaccines stimulate the immune system to react as if there were a real infection — it fends off the "infection" and remembers the organism so that it can fight it quickly should it enter the body later.

Some parents may hesitate to have their kids vaccinated because they're worried that the children will have serious reactions or may get the illness the vaccine is supposed to prevent. Because the components of vaccines are weakened or killed — and in some cases, only parts of the microorganism are used — they're unlikely to cause any serious illness. Some vaccines may cause mild reactions, such as soreness where the shot was given or fever, but serious reactions are rare.

The risks of [vaccinations](#) are small compared with the health risks associated with the diseases they're intended to prevent.

The following vaccinations and schedules are recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Please note that some variations are acceptable and that changes in recommendations frequently occur as new vaccines are developed. The AAP recommends that children get combination vaccines (rather than single vaccines) whenever possible. Many vaccines are offered in combination to help reduce the number of shots a child receives.

Recommended Immunizations for Babies

2010 Recommended Immunizations for Babies								
 at birth	HepB							
 2 months	HepB 1-2 mos	+ DTaP	+ PCV	+ Hib	+ Polio	+ RV		
 4 months	DTaP	+ PCV	+ Hib	+ Polio	+ RV			
 6 months	HepB 6-18 mos*	+ DTaP	+ PCV	+ Hib	+ Polio 6-18 mos*	+ RV		(Influenza) 6 mos through 18 years/ seasonal** 2009 H1N1***
 12 months	MMR 12- 15 mos*	+ PCV 12- 15 mos*	+ Hib 12- 15 mos*	+ Varicella 12-15 mos*	+ HepA 12- 23 mos*			(Influenza) 6 mos through 18 years/ seasonal** 2009 H1N1***
 15 months	DTaP 15- 18 mos*							(Influenza) 6 mos through 18 years/ seasonal** 2009 H1N1***

Vaccine Descriptions:

- **HepB:** protects against hepatitis
- **DTaP:** a combined vaccine that protects against diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis (whooping cough)
- **Hib:** protects against *Haemophilus influenzae* Type b
- **PCV:** protects against pneumococcal disease
- **Polio:** protects against polio, the vaccine is also known as IPV
- **RV:** protects against infections caused by the Rotavirus
- **Influenza:** protects against influenza (flu)
- **MMR:** protects against measles, mumps, and rubella (German measles)
- **Varicella:** protects against varicella, also known as chickenpox
- **HepA:** protects against hepatitis A

NOTE: If your children miss a shot, you don't need to start over, just go back to your doctor for the next shot. The doctor will help you keep your children up-to-date on his or her vaccinations.

* This is the age range in which this vaccine should be given.

** Influenza is a seasonal vaccine. All children ages 6 months through 18 years should receive vaccination during the influenza season each year. If this is the first time for flu vaccine, a child should receive two doses, separated by at least 4 weeks. If a child only receives one dose in the first season, he or she should receive two doses the next season.

***In addition to seasonal influenza vaccine, children also are recommended to receive the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine. Children younger than ten years should receive two doses of this vaccine separated by approximately 1 month.

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

The Recommended Immunization Schedules for Persons Aged 0 Through 18 Years are approved by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/acip>), American Academy of Pediatrics (<http://www.aap.org>), and American Academy of Family Physicians (<http://www.aafp.org>).