National Immunization Awareness Month

The Importance of Childhood Immunizations

Disease prevention is the key to public health. It is always better to prevent a disease than to treat it. Vaccines prevent disease in the people who receive them and protect those who come into contact with unvaccinated individuals. Vaccines help prevent infectious diseases and save lives. Vaccines are responsible for the control of many infectious diseases that were once common in this country, including polio, measles, diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), rubella (German measles), mumps, tetanus, and *Haemolphilus influenzae* type b (Hib).

Vaccine-preventable diseases have a costly impact, resulting in doctor's visits, hospitalizations, and premature deaths.

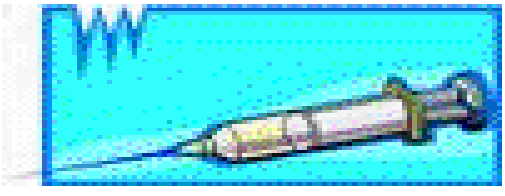
How Do Vaccines Work?

First, a vaccine is given by a shot or liquid by mouth. An alternative needle-free route is the use of inhalation by aerosol and powder. Most vaccines contain a weakened or dead disease germ or part of a disease germ.

Next, the body makes antibodies against the weakened or dead germs in the vaccine.

Then, these antibodies can fight the real disease germs – which can be lurking all around – if they invade the child's body. The antibodies will know how to destroy them and the child will not become ill.

Finally, protective antibodies stay on guard in the child's body to safeguard it from the real disease germs.



Recommended Childhood Immunization Schedule

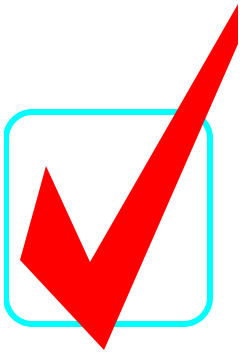
Vaccine	Age
Hepatitis B #1	Birth
#2	1-4 months
#3	6-18 months
DTaP	15-18 months
Hib	12-15 months
IPV	6-18 months
MMR #1	12-15 months
#2	4-6 years
Varicella	12-18 months
Pneumococcal	12-15 months

Vaccines for Teenagers and College Students

- Varicella (chickenpox) vaccine
- Hepatitis B vaccines
- Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR) vaccine
- Tetanus-Diphtheria vaccine
- Meningococcus vaccine (for college students)

Ten Things You Need to Know About Immunizations

1. **Why Your Child Should Be Immunized**
   Children need immunizations to protect them from dangerous childhood diseases. These diseases can have serious complications including death.
2. **Diseases That Childhood Vaccines Prevent**
   - Measles
   - Mumps
   - Polio
   - Rubella (German Measles)
   - Pertussis (Whooping Cough)
   - Diphtheria
   - Tetanus (Lockjaw)
   - *Ihaemophilus influenzaa* type b (Hib disease – a major cause of bacterial meningitis)
   - Hepatitis B
   - Varicella (chickenpox)
   - Pneumococcal (causes bacterial meningitis and blood infections)



3. **Number of Shots Your Child Needs**
   The following vaccinations are recommended by age two and can be given over five visits to a doctor or clinic:
   - 4 doses of diptheria, tetanus, and pertussis vaccine (DtaP)
   - 4 doses of Hib vaccine
   - 4 doses of pneumoncoccal vaccine
   - 3 doses of polio vaccine
   - 3 doses of hepatitis B vaccine
   - 1 dose of measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine (MMR)
   - 1 dose of varicella vaccine
4. **Like Any Medicine, There May Be Minor Side Effects**
   Side effects can occur with any medicine, including vaccines. Depending on the vaccine, these can include: slight fever, rash, or soreness at the site of injection. Slight discomfort is normal and should not be a cause for alarm. Your health care provider can give you additional information.
5. **It's Extremely Rare, But Vaccines Can Cause Serious Reactions – Weigh the Risks!**
   Serious reactions to vaccines are extremely rare. The risks of serious disease from not vaccinating are far greater than the risks of serious reaction to a vaccination.
6. **What to Do If Your Child Has a Serious Reaction**
   If you think your child is experiencing a persistent or severe reaction, call your doctor or get the child to a doctor right away. Write down what happened and the date and time it happened. Ask your doctor, nurse, or health department to file a Vaccine Adverse Event Report form or call 1-800-338-2382 to file this form yourself.
7. **Why You Should Not Wait to Vaccinate**
   Children under 5 are especially susceptible to disease because their immune systems have not built up the necessary defenses to fight infection. By immunizing on time (by age 2), you can protect your child from disease and also protect others at school or daycare.
8. **Be Sure to Track Your Shots Via Health Record**
   A vaccination health record helps you and your health care provider keep you child's vaccinations on schedule. If you move or change providers, having an accurate record might prevent your child from repeating vaccinations he or she has already had. A shot record should be started when your child receives his/her first vaccination and updated with each vaccination visit.
9. **Some Are Eligible For Free Vaccinations**
   A federal program called Vaccines for Children provides free vaccines to eligible children, including those without health insurance coverage, all those who are enrolled in Medicaid, American Indians, and Alaskan Natives.
10. **More Information Is Available**
    Call the National Immunization Information Hotline.
    - 1-800-232-2522 (English)
    - 1-800-232-0233 (Spanish)

All information courtesy of www.cdc.gov.