

Learning About Immunizations for Children

Introduction

You may feel confused about immunizations. Does your child need them? Are they safe? You're not alone. There's so much information and it isn't always clear. It can leave you wondering what's best for your child.

Most immunizations are given as shots. They are sometimes called vaccines, or vaccinations.

Should my child get immunized?

Immunizations save lives. They are the best way to help protect your child from certain infectious diseases. They also help reduce the spread of disease to others and prevent epidemics.

What if my child is not immunized?

If your child isn't immunized, then he or she is at risk to get some dangerous and possibly fatal diseases. Pertussis or "whooping cough," measles, and chickenpox are all diseases that still exist today. They can still cause serious illness or death. Also, your child may spread disease to others who are not able to be immunized.

Are vaccines safe?

Vaccines are studied for safety on an ongoing basis. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) carefully checks all vaccines for safety. Other government agencies watch for reports of rare or unexpected reactions. Sometimes the area where the shot was given may be sore. And some children may be fussy. Or they may get a slight fever. Serious side effects are very rare. The greater risk lies in getting the illness.

Do vaccines cause autism?

Vaccines do not cause autism. False claims in the news have made some parents concerned about a link between autism and vaccines. But studies have found no evidence that they cause autism.

Aren't most childhood diseases less common now?

Immunizations in the United States have led to a sharp drop in diseases. Better living conditions have also helped. But this isn't enough to protect your child from disease.

A vaccine protects your child from the disease. A vaccine doesn't get rid of the disease. The disease still exists. And if fewer children get immunized for a disease, the disease could come back.

Where can you learn more?

Go to <https://www.healthwise.net/patiented>

Enter **L461** in the search box to learn more about "**Learning About Immunizations for Children**".

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