

# Vaccinations for Children: Care Instructions



## Your Care Instructions

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Vaccinations (immunizations) help protect your child from certain diseases. They also help reduce the spread of disease to others. Sometimes a vaccine doesn't completely prevent the disease. But it will make the disease much less serious if your child does get it.

Some vaccines are given only one time. Others are given in several doses over time. Most are given as shots.

**Follow-up care is a key part of your child's treatment and safety.** Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if your child is having problems. It's also a good idea to know your child's test results and keep a list of the medicines your child takes.

## How can you care for your child at home?

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### Getting your child vaccinated

Most children get shots at birth and then get more shots over the next 18 months. Booster shots occur throughout life. These are later doses of any vaccines that need to be repeated. Fewer vaccines are needed after age 6. But older children and teens need shots too.

Standard vaccines for children include:

- Diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis (DTaP). This is given at 2 months, 4 months, and 6 months, between 15 and 18 months, and at 4 to 6 years.
- Polio (inactivated poliovirus vaccine, or IPV). It is given at 2 months, 4 months, 6 to 18 months, and 4 to 6 years.
- Measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR). This is given at 12 to 15 months and at 4 to 6 years. If your community has had a recent mumps outbreak, ask your health department if your child will need another dose.

- Chickenpox (varicella). It's given at 12 to 15 months and at 4 to 6 years.
- Hepatitis B (Hep B). It is given at birth and two more times by age 6 months.
- Hepatitis A (Hep A). This is given at 1 year and about 6 months after the first shot.
- Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib). It is given at 2 months, 4 months, and 12 to 15 months. Your child may also need a dose at 6 months.
- Pneumococcal vaccine (PCV). It's given at 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, and 12 to 15 months.
- Rotavirus. This is given at 2 months, 4 months, and sometimes at 6 months, depending on which brand is used.
- Influenza (flu). Flu shots are recommended every year for:
  - All children ages 6 months through 18 years.

Standard vaccines for pre-teens include:

- Meningococcal. This protects against some types of bacterial meningitis and blood infections.
- Human papillomavirus (HPV), for girls. It protects against types of HPV that together cause most cases of cervical cancer and genital warts. Boys can have the HPV vaccine to prevent genital warts.

## Benefits and risks of vaccinations

Vaccines help protect your child from disease. They also help reduce the spread of disease to others. Vaccines have greatly reduced the number of epidemics that happen.

Side effects are mostly minor, if they happen at all. They may include:

- Redness, mild swelling, or soreness where the shot was given. Apply ice or a cold pack to relieve these symptoms. Put a thin cloth between the ice and your child's skin.
- A slight fever. Give your child acetaminophen (Tylenol) to lower a fever. Do not give aspirin to anyone younger than 20. It has been linked to Reye syndrome, a serious illness. Do not give your child two or more pain medicines at the same time unless the doctor told you to. Many pain medicines have acetaminophen, which is Tylenol. Too much acetaminophen (Tylenol) can be harmful.
- Feeling drowsy and cranky, and having a poor appetite in some babies.
- A mild rash 7 to 14 days after the chickenpox or MMR vaccination. These types of rashes can last several days. They will go away with no treatment.

Severe reactions to vaccines, such as a very high fever or trouble breathing, are rare. The risk of a serious problem from a disease is much greater than the risk of having a severe reaction to a vaccine. Vaccines don't cause multiple sclerosis, autism spectrum disorder, or sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

## Keeping records

It is very important to keep current records of your child's shots, including any reactions to the vaccines. You may need to show proof of vaccines when you enroll your child in day care or school.

- Know when each vaccine should be scheduled. Put notes on your calendar to remind you. You also may want to ask your doctor to send you notices when vaccines are due.
- Make sure your doctor goes over your child's vaccination record with you during each office visit.
- Keep the record in a safe place with other important documents.

## When should you call for help?

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**Call 911** anytime you think your child may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- Your child has a major allergic reaction. Symptoms include:
  - Wheezing or having trouble breathing after starting a medicine.
  - Swelling of the lips, throat, tongue, or face.
- Your child has a seizure.
- Your child passes out (loses consciousness).

**Call your doctor now** or seek immediate medical care if:

- Your child has significant changes in alertness.
- Your child has a fever of 104.5°F or higher.
- Your child cries for more than 3 hours after getting a shot.

Watch closely for changes in your child's health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- Your child has a red or tender lump where he or she got a shot.

### Where can you learn more?

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

Enter **Z816** in the search box to learn more about "**Vaccinations for Children: Care Instructions**".

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