

Your school community

A vast majority of the children in your school community have received all of their childhood immunizations. As a result, many children are saved from the pain, discomfort, and even death caused by vaccine-preventable diseases. And both children and teachers lose far fewer school and work days due to vaccine-preventable diseases.

Immunization created this public health success story. The care and perseverance of individual school leaders and educators, like you, keep it alive. Help us keep immunization rates high and get the number of vaccine-preventable diseases even lower. Everyone—children, teens, and adults—in your community are depending on you.

You can make a difference

It's never too late to encourage young children and adolescents to understand and take responsibility for their health. Immunizations can be scary for children, so every adult needs to take the time to explain about vaccine-preventable diseases and the benefits of immunization.

No matter how you contribute to your school, you can play a role in protecting the children from vaccine-preventable diseases. Here are some ideas that will help protect the children entrusted to your care.

Administrators

- Include immunization reminders in school newsletters.
- Organize a health fair.
- Actively ensure students are in compliance with state immunization laws and recommendations.

Leaders of Parent Organizations

- Incorporate immunization information into organizational newsletters.
- Promote immunization directed toward special populations; including influenza vaccine for children with chronic health conditions such as asthma, or catch-up programs targeting Hepatitis B.
- Include immunization as part of any health committee.
- Volunteer to review student immunization records to guarantee they are complete.

Teachers

- Incorporate immunization into the health curriculum.
- Encourage students to use the CDC website, www.cdc.gov, for information on preventive health, including immunization.

School Nurses

- Provide education to parents on all vaccines, particularly newly released vaccines.
- Refer children whose immunization records are not up-to-date to their health care providers.
- Take advantage of continuing education courses on immunization; visit the CDC immunization website, or contact your local health departments for relevant courses.
- Review information on recognition of vaccine-preventable diseases. You are often on the front line of early diagnosis.

All Adults

- Set a good example by protecting your own health. Immunizations are not just for children. There are recommended vaccinations for adults as well.
- Protect the children in your care by checking with your health care provider to be sure your immunizations are up-to-date.

Why is immunization so important?

Although immunization rates are high and death and disability have significantly decreased, some children in every community are not protected from vaccine-preventable diseases. Some of these children cannot be vaccinated because of medical conditions. Others have not received all of their vaccines. A few children may not respond to the vaccines they receive because vaccines, as with all medications, are not 100 percent effective in all people.

Vaccinating all children who can be vaccinated protects children at risk of spreading these diseases to others in your community. For example, one child with a highly infectious disease, such as chickenpox, can expose an entire classroom to the disease in one day. Within several weeks the whole school could be exposed.

Which diseases can the vaccines prevent?

- Measles
- Mumps
- Polio
- Rubella (German Measles)
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough)
- Hepatitis A
- Diphtheria
- Hepatitis B
- Tetanus
- *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib)
- Pneumococcal diseases
- Influenza (flu)
- Varicella (chickenpox)

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