IMMUNIZATION

Protect the Child

♦

Protect the Future

CDC™

Childhood Immunization

CDC National Immunization Information HOTLINE

ENGLISH: **800-232-2522**

ESPAÑOL: **800-232-0233**

Early protection is vital

Immunization begins at birth. This early start on immunization is crucial because an infant's immune system does not yet have the necessary defenses to fight infectious diseases. Infants and toddlers are, therefore, especially susceptible to these illnesses as well as their serious complications. Immunization is one of the most important tools we have to protect children from disease. And an adequately protected child will have completed the recommended primary series of doses by age two.

Don't delay.

Which diseases can childhood vaccines prevent?

Vaccines are readily available to prevent children from suffering or dying from the following diseases:

- Measles
- Mumps
- Polio
- Rubella [German Measles]
- Pertussis [Whooping Cough]
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Tetanus
- Spinal Meningitis
- Pneumococcal Disease
- Chickenpox
- Diphtheria

prevention

But I've never even seen some of these diseases!

Today, we see fewer diseases in the U.S. And it's because responsible health care providers and parents have immunized millions of children over the past years. Their efforts have stopped the spread of many terrible diseases. Smallpox, for example, no longer exists anywhere in the world; we no longer vaccinate against it.

But don't be fooled. The viruses and bacteria that cause the current vaccine-preventable diseases are still out there. Those diseases are prevalent—even epidemic—in other parts of the world. And people in our mobile society travel to and from these countries every day.

If we were to stop immunizing our children now, the diseases that injured and killed only a few years ago—those diseases we seldom see—will return in epidemic proportion. And that next epidemic is only a plane ride away.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Immunization Program
1600 Clifton Road • MS E-52 • Atlanta, GA 30333

800-232-2522 (English) 800-232-0233 (Español) www.cdc.gov/nip

SAFER • HEALTHIER • PEOPLE™

Tell me more.

We invite both health care professionals and consumers to call our CDC National Immunization Information Hotline and visit our immunization website. We provide a wealth of reliable information on immunization, vaccines, and the diseases they prevent.

CDC Immunization Hotline–English: 800-232-2522 Español: 800-232-0233 Website–www.cdc.gov/nip/

Why should almost all children be immunized?

A few children cannot be immunized because of medical conditions such as cancer. And for a small number of others, the vaccines don't take. These children are at a higher risk of death and disability from preventable diseases. However, if a high enough proportion of your community is immunized, transmission of diseases that are passed from person to person may be interrupted. Thus protection is provided for those who cannot, themselves, be protected by immunization.

In addition to protecting the immunized child from potentially serious diseases, vaccines protect your entire community by reducing the spread of infectious agents.

Why give so many shots at one time?

We are fortunate to have a number of vaccines to safeguard children from many terrible diseases. Protecting children during the vulnerable first two years of life results in various vaccine doses coming due at the same time. Researchers are now working to combine more vaccines into a single injection, thus requiring fewer shots.

Numerous studies have proven that simultaneous inoculations do not compromise the immune system or cause any other adverse effect.

Questions

Are the recommended vaccines safe?

Years of testing are required, by law, before vaccines can be licensed. And once in use, they are continually monitored for safety and efficacy. These vaccines are held to the highest standard of safety; however, no medicine is 100% safe. Even a medication as common and life-saving as penicillin can cause an adverse reaction in a small number of people. Vaccines are extremely safe, and improvements for both the vaccines and the immunization schedules are constantly being sought and implemented to make them even safer.