

Got Your Shot?

Are you and your children on top of receiving your vaccinations?

August is National Immunization Awareness Month, a good time to remind oneself of the importance of receiving vaccines—and not just in the early stages of life. Being up to date with your vaccinations is important for avoiding serious illnesses, as well as preventing others from becoming ill.

August is also when many children and adolescents are preparing to go back to school. Below are the vaccines recommended for children at various ages, according to the National Institutes of Health ([see their information on the reverse side](#)).

- **Tdap**
- **Meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV4)**
- **Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine**
- **Influenza (flu) vaccine**

In addition, people over the age of 60 are recommended to receive a zoster vaccination, regardless of whether or not they have had zoster herpes.

Vaccines have been one of the most significant medical developments in the past century, helping eradicate deadly diseases such as smallpox and substantially reducing cases of other diseases such as polio. Continuing to vaccinate throughout one's life will protect against these diseases and others.

TURN OVER FOR VACCINATION INFORMATION ►►►



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Your child spends more time at school than anywhere else except home. Make sure your school-aged children are ready for a healthy school year before and while they attend. Whether you're a parent or educator, use these resources and tips to prepare for and work through common challenges.

CHECK-UPS AND IMMUNIZATIONS

It's a good idea to take your child in for a physical and eye exam before school starts. If your child will be participating in a sports activity, your family doctor may have to sign a release form to permit your child to participate.

Most schools require that your child's immunization shots be up-to-date. Remember, that each state has different immunization requirements. Let your healthcare provider know if you have any questions or concerns about the vaccines your child is scheduled to receive.

School entry may require documentation of immunization records. Find out what your child's school requires and bring any school forms for your healthcare provider to fill out and sign. Be sure to keep your own copy of any records. Failure to keep immunizations up-to-date could prevent your child from attending school.



VACCINES STOP ILLNESS

To prevent the spread of disease, it is more important than ever to vaccinate your child. In the United States, vaccines have reduced or eliminated many infectious diseases that once routinely killed or harmed many infants, children, and adults. However, the viruses and bacteria that cause vaccine-preventable disease and death still exist and can be passed on to people who are not protected by vaccines.

Some diseases (like polio and diphtheria) are becoming very rare in the United States. Of course, they are becoming rare largely because we have been vaccinating against them. Unless we can completely eliminate the disease, it is important to keep immunizing. Even if there are only a few cases of disease today, if we take away the protection given by vaccination, more and more people will be infected and will spread disease to others.

We don't vaccinate just to protect our children. We also vaccinate to protect our grandchildren and their grandchildren. With one disease, smallpox, we eradicated the disease. Our children don't have to get smallpox shots any more because the disease no longer exists. If we keep vaccinating now, parents in the future may be able to trust that diseases like polio and meningitis won't infect, cripple, or kill children.

WHICH VACCINES DO KIDS NEED, AND WHEN?

- **Tdap:** A booster to protect against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (whooping cough). Recommended for preteens (11-12), as well as any teens (13-18) who haven't gotten this shot yet.
- **Meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV4):** Protects against meningococcal disease. First dose is recommended at age 11 or 12 followed by a booster (2nd shot) at age 16-18.
- **Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine:** Protects against the types of HPV that cause most cervical cancers. HPV vaccine is given in three doses over a 6-month period to boys and girls starting at 11-12 years old.
- **Influenza (flu) vaccine:** Protects against different strains of seasonal influenza. A yearly dose is recommended for everyone 6 months and older.
- Also, check to confirm that your teen has received all recommended childhood vaccines, or if they need to catch up on any vaccines they have not yet received.