

Talking to Parents About Infant Vaccines



Parents consider you their most trusted source of information when it comes to vaccines. When talking to parents about vaccines, make a strong, effective recommendation and allow time for parents to ask questions. Hearing your answers to their questions can help parents feel more confident vaccinating their child according to CDC's recommended immunization schedule.

Are vaccines safe for my child?

Yes. Millions of children safely receive vaccines each year. The U.S. has a long-standing vaccine safety system that ensures vaccines are as safe as possible.

No. Many people want answers about the causes of autism — including me. But well designed and conducted studies that I can share with you show that MMR vaccine is not a cause of autism.

Is there a link between vaccines and autism?

Can vaccines overload my baby's immune system?

No. Vaccines help babies fight infections by introducing a small number of antigens into their bodies. Antigens are parts of germs that cause babies' immune systems to go to work. Vaccines contain only a tiny fraction of the antigens that babies encounter in their environment every day.

We vaccinate children early because they are susceptible to diseases at a young age. Young children also have the highest risks of complications that could lead to hospitalization or death.

Why do vaccines start so early?

Don't infants have natural immunity? Isn't natural immunity better than the kind from vaccines?

Babies may get some temporary immunity from mom during pregnancy, but these antibodies do not last long, leaving your baby vulnerable to disease if you don't vaccinate him/her.

There is no data to support that spacing out vaccines offers safe or effective protection from these diseases. Any time you delay a vaccine, you leave your baby vulnerable to disease. It's really best to stay on schedule.

What do you think of delaying some vaccines or following a non-standard schedule?

Do I have to vaccinate my baby on schedule if I'm breastfeeding him?

Yes. Breast milk provides important protection from some infections as your baby's immune system is developing, but breast milk does not protect children against all diseases.

Getting every dose of each vaccine provides your child with the best protection. Depending on the vaccine, he/she may need more than one dose to build high enough immunity to prevent disease or to boost immunity that fades over time.

Why are so many doses needed for each vaccine?

My child is sick right now. Is it okay for her to still get shots?

Tell me what's going on. Usually, children can get vaccinated even if they have a mild illness like a cold, earache, mild fever, or diarrhea.

Most vaccine side effects are very minor, like soreness where the shot was given, fussiness, or a low-grade fever. These typically only last a couple of days and are treatable. Serious reactions are very rare. If your child experiences any reactions that concern you, call us.

What are the side effects of the vaccines?

For more information, visit
cdc.gov/vaccines/conversations

Talking to Parents about HPV Vaccine



HPV VACCINE IS CANCER PREVENTION

Recommend HPV vaccination in the **same way** and on the **same day** as all adolescent vaccines. You can say, “Now that your son is 11, he is due for vaccinations today to help protect him from meningitis, HPV cancers, and whooping cough. Do you have any questions?” Taking the time to listen and understand parents’ concerns can help you respond to their concerns more effectively.

Why does my child need HPV vaccine?

HPV vaccine is important because it prevents infections that can cause cancer. That’s why we need to start the shot series today.

How do you know the vaccine works?

Studies continue to prove HPV vaccination works extremely well, decreasing the number of infections and HPV precancers in young people since it has been available.

Why do they need HPV vaccine at such a young age?

Vaccines protect your child before they are exposed to a disease. That’s why we give the HPV vaccine earlier rather than later, to protect them long before they are ever exposed.

Also, if your child gets the shot now, they will only need two doses. If you wait until your child is older, they may end up needing three shots.

Why do boys need the HPV vaccine?

HPV vaccination can help prevent future infections that can lead to cancers of the penis, anus, and back of the throat in men.

Are all of these vaccines actually required?

I strongly recommend each of these vaccines and so do experts at the CDC and major medical organizations. School entry requirements are developed for public health and safety, but don’t always reflect the most current medical recommendations for your child’s health.

Some HPV infections can cause cancer—like cancer of the cervix or in the back of the throat—but we can protect your child from these cancers in the future by getting the first HPV shot today.

What diseases are caused by HPV?

HPV is a very common infection in women and men that can cause cancer. Starting the vaccine series today will help protect your child from the cancers and diseases caused by HPV.

Is my child really at risk for HPV?

Studies tell us that getting HPV vaccine doesn’t make kids more likely to start having sex. I made sure my child (or grandchild, etc.) got HPV vaccine, and I recommend we give your child her first HPV shot today.

I’m worried my child will think that getting this vaccine makes it OK to have sex.

Yes, HPV vaccination is very safe. Like any medication, vaccines can cause side effects, including pain, swelling, or redness where the shot was given. That’s normal for HPV vaccine too and should go away in a day or two. Sometimes kids faint after they get shots and they could be injured if they fall from fainting. We’ll have your child stay seated after the shot to help protect him/her.

I’m worried about the safety of HPV vaccine. Do you think it’s safe?

There is no evidence available to suggest that getting HPV vaccine will have an effect on future fertility. However, women who develop an HPV precancer or cancer could require treatment that would limit their ability to have children.

Can HPV vaccine cause infertility in my child?

For more information, visit cdc.gov/vaccines/conversations

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