



VACCINATE  
YOUR FAMILY

# YOUR FAMILY'S GUIDE TO VACCINES

Easy-to-Use Resources for  
Parents and Parents-to-Be

2025



## Dear Parent or Parent-to-Be,

We know you want to keep your family healthy and safe. That's why this resource was created—to give you helpful, easy-to-understand information about vaccines for you and your family.

**Vaccines save lives.** Vaccines help protect against serious diseases like measles, flu, whooping cough, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), COVID-19, and chickenpox. Getting your child vaccinated is one of the best ways to keep them healthy and protected.

**WIC cares about your whole family's health.** That includes helping you stay on track with vaccinations. WIC staff can help you check your child's vaccination status using your state's electronic immunization information system (IIS). If your child is behind on vaccines, they can help connect you with a nearby clinic or doctor's office to get caught up.

**Most health insurance plans cover the cost of vaccines.** If you're not sure, check with your provider. If your child doesn't have insurance, is on Medicaid, or is underinsured, they may qualify for **free vaccines** through the federal **Vaccines for Children (VFC)** program. Learn more at [vaccinateyourfamily.org/paying-for-vaccines](https://vaccinateyourfamily.org/paying-for-vaccines).

**Pregnant women need vaccines, too.** Getting vaccinated during pregnancy helps protect you and your baby from serious illnesses like flu, whooping cough, RSV, and COVID-19.

To learn more and get answers to common questions, visit [vaccinateyourfamily.org](https://vaccinateyourfamily.org).

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This booklet was created by **Vaccinate Your Family** with support from the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**.

# What Vaccines Does My Child Need?

## YOUR CHILD'S IMMUNIZATION SCHEDULE

These are the recommended vaccines and preventive antibodies for birth through 18 years. Talk with your primary healthcare provider about what's best and recommended for your child(ren).

STAGE	AGE	VACCINES
INFANT	Birth	Hepatitis B (Dose 1), RSV antibody
	2 Months	DTaP (Dose 1), hepatitis B (Dose 2), Hib (Dose 1), polio (Dose 1), pneumococcal (Dose 1), rotavirus (Dose 1)
	4 Months	DTaP (Dose 2), Hib (Dose 2), pneumococcal (Dose 2), polio (Dose 2), rotavirus (Dose 2)
	6 Months	DTaP (Dose 3), Hepatitis B (Dose 3 – anytime between now and 18 months), Hib (Dose 3), Pneumococcal (Dose 3), Polio (Dose 3 – anytime between now and 18 months), Rotavirus (Dose 3), COVID-19 (yearly starting now), Influenza/flu (yearly starting now)
TODDLER	12-15 Months	RSV antibody (for high-risk children), chickenpox (Dose 1), hepatitis A (Dose 1), Hib (Dose 4), MMR (Dose 1), pneumococcal (Dose 4)
	15-18 Months	DTaP (Dose 4)
	18-23 Months	Hepatitis A (Dose 2   6 months after 1st dose)
CHILDHOOD	4-6 Years	Chickenpox (Dose 2), DTaP (Dose 5), MMR (Dose 2), polio (Dose 4)
PRETEEN	11-12 Years	HPV (2-dose series; can start as early as age 9), meningococcal (MenACWY), Tdap
TEEN	16 Years	Meningococcal booster (MenACWY), meningococcal B (if recommended)
	16-18 Years	Meningococcal B (talk to your primary healthcare provider), catch-up shots if needed

### VACCINE ABBREVIATIONS KEY

**DTaP:** Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis

**Hib:** Haemophilus influenzae type b

**HPV:** Human Papillomavirus

**MMR:** Measles, Mumps, Rubella

**Tdap:** Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis

### Need to catch up?

It's never too late. Your child can still get protection even if they've missed some vaccinations. Talk to your primary healthcare provider to learn about what you can do.

Please refer to the linked immunization schedules below for more detailed recommendations and definitions. They are also available to print!

**Birth to 6 years:** [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/imz-schedules/child-easyread.html](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/imz-schedules/child-easyread.html)

**7-18 years:** [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/imz-schedules/adolescent-easyread.html](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/imz-schedules/adolescent-easyread.html)

# Where to Get Vaccines

You don't have to figure this out on your own. There are many places where your child can get vaccinated.

1

## Your Child's Primary Healthcare Provider



This is usually the best place. Your child's primary healthcare provider knows their health history and can give vaccines during regular checkups or [well-child visits](#).

*Tip:*

When you make your child's appointment, say: *"Can you check if my child needs any vaccines?"*

2

## Local Health Departments



Your city or county health department often offers low-cost or free vaccines. Some have walk-in clinics, mobile vans, or weekend hours.

**Find yours:**

[www.naccho.org/membership/lhd-directory](http://www.naccho.org/membership/lhd-directory)

3

## WIC Clinics



If you're part of the **WIC** (Women, Infants, and Children) program, ask the staff for help. They often work with nearby clinics or may have vaccines onsite.

*Tip:*

You don't have to be a U.S. citizen to get WIC assistance.

4

## Pharmacies



Some pharmacies offer vaccines for children—but age rules vary by state. Most give flu and COVID vaccines to children over 3. Call ahead to ask.

5

## Community Clinics & Events



Look for local vaccine events at:

- School health fairs
- Community centers
- Places of worship
- Mobile vaccine units



## Good News About Cost: Some Children Qualify for Free Vaccines

Some children under age 19 can get **free vaccines** through the [Vaccines for Children program](#).

**Your child may qualify if they:**

- Don't have health insurance (uninsured)
- Are eligible for Medicaid
- Are American Indian or Alaska Native
- Get care at a community health center or Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC)

**Ask your clinic:**  
*"Do you offer vaccines through the Vaccines for Children program?"*

# Common Questions

## VACCINE SAFETY & CONCERNS

**Q** Are vaccines safe for babies and children?

**A** Yes. Vaccines are carefully tested for safety. They're monitored constantly, even after approval. Millions of babies are safely vaccinated each year.

**Q** What are the potential side effects of vaccines?

**A** Most side effects are mild—like a sore arm, tiredness/fatigue, or a low-grade fever. Serious side effects are very rare.

**Q** Can vaccines cause autism?

**A** No. Studies show there's no link between vaccines and autism. To learn more, read VYF's [The Truth About Autism and Vaccines](#).

**Q** Do kids really need all these vaccines?

**A** Yes. Each vaccine protects against a different disease. Skipping even one could leave your child vulnerable.

**Q** Is it safe for babies to get so many vaccines at once?

**A** Yes, it's safe. Babies' immune systems can handle far more than what's in vaccines. Getting them on time gives the best protection early in life.

## PRACTICAL ISSUES

**Q** What if we're behind on vaccines?

**A** That's okay. Your primary healthcare provider can help you catch up. It's never too late to protect your child.

**Q** Can I spread the vaccines out over more visits?

**A** The recommended schedule gives the best protection at the right time. But if you have concerns, talk with your primary healthcare provider who can address your concerns.

**Q** What if my child is sick on the day they're supposed to get vaccinated?

**A** A mild illness, like a cold or low fever, usually isn't a problem. Ask your primary healthcare provider—they'll decide what's best.

**Q** How do I keep track of all the vaccines?

**A** Ask for a copy of your child's vaccine record after each visit that includes vaccination. You can also take a photo or use a tracking app. You may also be able to access your records through your state's immunization information system (IIS).

**Q** What if I don't have health insurance?

**A** Many children under 19 can get **free vaccines** through the Vaccines for Children program.

## PREGNANCY & FAMILY VACCINES

**Q** Can I get vaccines while I'm pregnant?

**A** Yes. Some vaccines (like Tdap, flu, COVID-19, and RSV) will even protect both you and your baby. Getting vaccinated while pregnant also helps protect your newborn after birth.

**Q** Should my partner or other family members get vaccinated, too?

**A** Yes. When everyone around your baby is vaccinated, it lowers the chance your baby will be exposed to dangerous diseases.

**Q** Is it safe to get vaccinated while breastfeeding?

**A** Yes. Vaccines are safe during breastfeeding and may even give your baby added protection.

## CULTURAL & EMOTIONAL CONCERNS

**Q** What if I've heard something different in my community or online?

**A** There's a lot of confusing information out there. The best way to get the truth is to ask your healthcare provider.



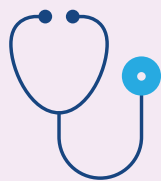
**Q** I'm nervous. What if I make the wrong decision?

**A** That's okay. You're not alone. Asking questions and getting good information means you are doing the right thing.

**Q** Do vaccines have ingredients I should worry about?

**A** Vaccine ingredients are tested and safe. You can learn more about vaccine ingredients [here](#). And feel free to ask your primary healthcare provider if you would like more information.

## NEED MORE HELP?



Talk to your child's primary  
healthcare provider



Visit Vaccinate Your Family's  
[Vaccination FAQs](#)



Call the CDC info line:  
**1-800-CDC-INFO**  
(English & Spanish)



# What to Do Next — Your Action Plan

You're ready to protect your child—here's how to start:



## Make an Appointment

Call your child's primary healthcare provider, local clinic, or health department.



Ask:

- *Is my child due for any vaccines?*
- *Do you offer free or low-cost vaccines?*
- *Can I schedule a well-child visit?*



## Ask Questions

During your visit, you can ask:

- *Which vaccines is my child getting today?*
- *What potential side effects should I expect?*
- *When should I come back?*



**Tip:**

*Write down your questions ahead of time.*



## Keep Track

After your visit:

- Ask for a copy of your child's vaccination record
- Add the next visit to your calendar
- Store records in a safe place



## Get Help If You Need It

Don't have a doctor? No insurance? No problem. Try:

- Local health departments
- WIC office or clinic
- School nurse or community health center



*You are not alone. There are programs to help.*





# Bring This With You — Questions to Ask at Your Child's Visit

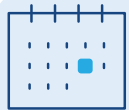
You don't have to know everything. Just asking a few questions can help you feel more confident and informed.

Here are some good questions to ask when you bring your child in to get vaccinated:



## About Today's Vaccines

- *What vaccines is my child getting today?*
- *What do these vaccines protect against?*
- *Are they safe?*
- *What potential side effects should I watch for?*



## About the Vaccine Schedule

- *Is my child up to date on all their vaccines?*
- *What's the next vaccine my child will need—and when?*
- *What happens if we miss a vaccine or fall behind?*



## About Cost and Access

- *Do these vaccines cost anything?*
- *Do you offer vaccines through the Vaccines for Children program?*
- *Can I get a copy of my child's vaccine record?*



## If You're Pregnant or Planning

- *Are there vaccines I should get while pregnant?*
- *Can I protect my baby before they're born?*

*There's no such thing as a silly question when it comes to your child's health!*

**Write Down Your Own Questions:**

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**Tip:**

*It's okay to take notes, ask for things to be repeated, or say, "I'm not sure I understand." Your healthcare provider is there to support you.*

# Where to Get Trusted Vaccine Information

There's a lot of information out there—but not all of it is reliable. Here are trusted **websites, hotlines, and tools** that are created for parents like you.

When in doubt, check it out with a trusted source.

1

## Learn About Vaccines & Schedules

These sites help parents understand what vaccines their child needs and why.

- [Vaccinate Your Family](#)  
Easy guides, fact sheets, and help answering common questions.
- [CDC's Vaccines for Your Children](#)  
Official vaccine schedule, safety information, and age-by-age guidance.
- [Immunize.org](#)  
Printable handouts, FAQs, and trusted info for families and healthcare providers.
- [Vaccine Education Center at CHOP](#)  
Videos and plain-language articles by doctors from Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

2

## Find Free or Low-Cost Vaccines

Resources to help parents locate local services, especially if they don't have insurance.

- [Vaccines for Children Program](#)  
Information about free vaccines for eligible kids under 19 (Medicaid, uninsured, etc.)
- [HRSA Find a Health Center](#)  
Search for federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) that offer low- or no-cost care, including vaccines.

3

## Get Help, Ask Questions, or Connect

Resources for support beyond websites—like hotlines, texting programs, and social media.

- [HealthyChildren.org](#)  
From the American Academy of Pediatrics — answers to common parent questions, including vaccines.
- [Voices for Vaccines](#)  
Parent-led stories, podcasts, and science-backed information.