



Be Wise. Immunize.

Immunization is a lifelong life-protecting task at every age.

School is just around the corner and it is time to schedule the required school physical exams and immunizations for your child(ren).

For more than 50 years, immunizations, or vaccinations, have protected children and kept them healthy and safe. The days when parents used to worry if their child will wake up with illnesses, such as Polio or Whooping Cough, are gone—or are they? Within the past few years a negative light has been cast on vaccinations and many parents now find themselves struggling with the vaccination decision—to vaccinate or not to vaccinate. It is only natural that parents want to protect their children and that they have these concerns. However, it can be confusing, and contradictory information on immunizations persist every where, especially on the Internet. To help you with your vaccination decision, we have gathered the following frequently asked questions on immunizations.

Q. Are vaccines still necessary?

A. Vaccines are still needed. In the U.S., better nutrition, improved living conditions, antibiotics and most importantly, vaccines have minimized the threat of many diseases. However, the bacteria and viruses that cause diseases like Polio, Whooping Cough, Small Pox, etc., still exist. By not vaccinating your child, you may be trading the risks from the vaccine for the more serious risks of the disease.

Q. Are all vaccines safe?

A. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) only approves vaccines after years of extensive research to ensure safety and then continually monitors the manufacturing and distribution processes. Although vaccines are generally safe, some children may experience mild side effects, like fever and tenderness and swelling at the injection site, after a vaccination. *Consult your health care provider if you are concerned that your child may be experiencing side effects after being given a vaccination shot.*

Q. Is it safe to give more than one immunization at a time?

A. Many years of experience and careful research have shown that vaccines used for childhood immunizations can be given together safely and effectively. Side effects are not increased when multiple vaccines are given together when compared with vaccines given on separate occasions.

Q. Does the Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) vaccine cause Autism?

A. Numerous MMR studies on this topic have shown that there is no conclusive scientific evidence that links the MMR vaccine and autism. Autism is often identified in children that are 18-30 months of age—around the same time the MMR vaccine is given—which may be lending to the confusion.

Q. What is thimerosal?

A. Thimerosal (or thiomersal) is a preservative with very small amounts of mercury that may be added to larger vials of vaccine to prevent bacterial contamination. Today, with many vaccines being produced in smaller, single-doses, thimerosal is no longer used in most routine childhood vaccinations; the only exceptions in the U.S. may be some flu vaccines for children age 2 and older. The World Health Organization agreed that there is no evidence that thimerosal has side effects that are unsafe and they continue to support the preservative's use in vaccines, especially in poorer countries, because the smaller, single-dose vaccines are too expensive.

Q. What vaccines should my child get at each age?

A. Please review the recommended vaccinations "Schedule for Children" at the end of this newsletter and keep it as a reference tool. At your next office visit, talk to your child's health care provider about the vaccines that are appropriate for your child's age. Don't forget about your teenagers and college-bound students, they too need immunizations.

Please note that vaccination schedules can change based on the recommendations of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). For additional information or to discuss concerns about childhood vaccinations contact your child's health care provider.

Q. Do I need to delay any vaccinations if my child is ill?

A. You do not need to delay any vaccinations if your child has a cold or another minor illness. Always speak with your child's health care provider when you have questions or concerns.

Q. Are there other resources available on immunizations/vaccinations?

A. Additional information about immunizations/vaccinations can also be found at:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/vaccines

American Academy of Pediatrics
www.aap.org

National Network for Immunization Information
www.immunizationinfo.org

The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Parent PACK
www.vaccine.chop.edu/parents



Schedule for Children

As a parent, you want to keep your child healthy and happy. That's why we put together this preventive health schedule for children.

This schedule was developed based on recommendations from the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American

Academy of Family Physicians and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, are designed to help you and your child's doctor develop a plan for

preventive health care for your child. If you have questions, talk to your child's doctor. For questions regarding benefits, contact Member Service.

	Birth	1 month	2 months	4 months	6 months	9 months	12 months	15 months	18 months	24 months	30 months	3 years	4 years	5 years	6 years	7 years	8 years	9 years	10 years	11 years	12 years	15 years	18 years		
Wellness exam ¹	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Blood Pressure													✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Visual Screening ^{2,3}													✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Hearing Screening ²	✓												✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
SCREENINGS																									
Hereditary Metabolic Screening	-- ✓ --																								
Lead Screening						✓																			
Hematocrit or Hemoglobin							✓																		
IMMUNIZATIONS ⁴ (includes PA state mandated benefits)																									
Hepatitis A ⁵									Dose 1			Dose 2													
Hepatitis B ⁵		Dose 1																							
Diphtheria/Tetanus/Pertussis (DTaP) ⁶			Dose 1	Dose 2	Dose 3																				
H. Influenzae Type B (Hib)			Dose 1	Dose 2	Dose 3 ⁶																				
Polio (IPV) ⁶			Dose 1	Dose 2																					
Pneumococcal Conjugate (PCV) ^{6,7}			Dose 1	Dose 2	Dose 3																				
Measles/Mumps/Rubella (MMR) ⁵																									
Chicken Pox ⁵																									
Influenza ⁵																									
Meningococcal																									
Rotavirus			Dose 1	Dose 2	Dose 3																				
Human Papilloma-virus (HPV)																									
CARE FOR PATIENTS WITH RISK FACTORS																									
Tuberculin Test																									
Cholesterol Screening																									
Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, HIV and Syphilis Screenings ⁸																									
Pelvic Exam and Pap Test ^{9,10}																									

1- This includes, at appropriate ages, height and weight measurement, developmental and behavioral assessment, including autism screening, and other care as determined by the doctor. Coverage is based on a calendar year.
 2- As shown and when conditions indicate. If patient is uncooperative, rescreen within six months.
 3- Optometric exams require an optional vision benefit

4- Additional immunizations and expanded age ranges may be eligible based on the PA State mandate for childhood immunizations.
 5- Children can get this vaccine at any age if not previously vaccinated.
 6- Or other series/schedule as recommended by the doctor.

7- Previously unvaccinated older infants and children who are beyond the age of the routine infant schedule should follow the dosing guidelines recommended by their doctor.
 8- Routine screening for all sexually active females and males.
 9- Strongly recommended for females who have been sexually active.
 10- Pap tests should begin approximately 3 years after onset of sexual activity.