Immunization

Why Immunize?

Children need shots to protect them from dangerous childhood diseases and their serious complications. Shots also protect your other children and could actually help to rid the world of some diseases that have been crippling and killing children for centuries.

Why *Do* Vaccines Help?

Children get sick when their bod*ies* are invaded by germs. It is the job of their immune system to protect them from these germs.
Vaccines are made from the same germs (or parts of them) that cause disease. The idea behind vaccination is to give children immunity to a disease before it has a chance to make them sick.

How Many Shots Does My Child Need ?

The following vaccinations are recommended by age two and can be given over five visits to a doctor.
4 doses of diphtheria, tetanus & pertussis vaccine (DTaP), 4 doses of Hib *(*Influenza*)* vaccine, 4 doses of pneumococcal vaccine, 3 doses of polio vaccine, 3 doses of hepatitis B vaccine, 1 dose of measles, mumps & rubella vaccine (MMR), 1 dose of varicella vaccine. (Color version of chart has a schedule for children through 18 years old).

Why Do Children Need So Many Shots?

There are 12 potentially serious diseases that vaccines protect against At least one shot is needed for each of these diseases, and for some of them several doses are required for the best protection.

Why Immunize at Such an Early Age?

Vaccines are given at an early age because the diseases they prevent can strike at an early age. Children under 5 are especially susceptible to disease because their immune systems have not built up the necessary defenses to fight infection. Some diseases are far more serious or common among infants or young children. Any of them can kill a child. It is easy to forget how serious they are because we don't see them nearly as much as we used to thanks largely to vaccines. Immunizing on time (by age 2) can protect your child from disease and also protect others at school or daycare.

What Will Happen If My Child Doesn't Get These Shots?

If your child goes through life without ever being exposed to any of these diseases, nothing would happen. If your child were exposed to any of these diseases, there is a good chance they would get the disease. In addition, they could also spread the disease to other children and adults who are not immunized.

Are Shots Safe?

In most cases, vaccines cause no side effects, or only mild reactions such as *a* low-grade fever or soreness at the injection site. Very rarely, children experience more serious side effects, like allergic reactions. Severe reactions to vaccines occur so rarely that the risk is usually difficult to calculate. If the child is having a severe reaction take him or her to the emergency department right away. The important thing to remember is that the risk *of* getting the disease is much more dangerous than getting the shots.

Do Shots Always Work?

Shots work most of the time, but not always. Most childhood immunizations give immunity to 90%-99% of the children who get them. But occasionally a child will not respond to certain vaccines. This is another reason why it is important for all children to be vaccinated.

Keep A Record

A shot record should be started when your child receives his/her first vaccination and updated with each vaccination visit to help you keep track if you move or change providers.

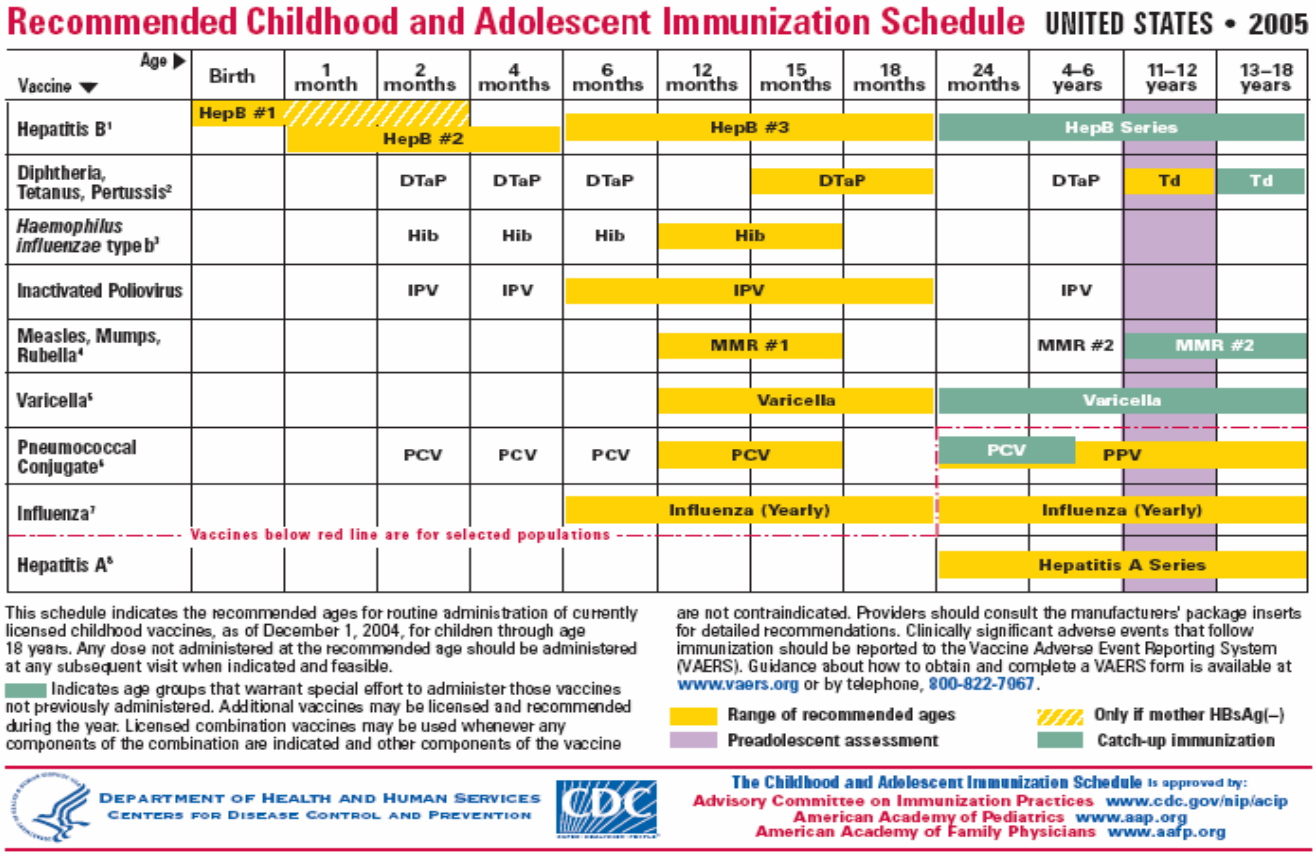
A Gonzaga graduate nursing student, Christopher Korsgaard, created this informational material. It should be used in consultation with a health care provider.

Vaccination Checklist

Sometimes a child should wait before getting certain vaccines, or should not get them at all. Tell your health care provider if any of these apply to your child.

> Is your child sick today? (More than a common cold, earache, etc.)
> Does your child have any severe (life-threatening) allergies?
> Has your child ever had a severe reaction after a vaccination?
> Does your child have a weakened immune system (because of diseases such as cancer, or medications such as steroids)?
>Has your child gotten a transfusion, or any other blood product, recently?
>Has your child ever had convulsions or any kind of nervous system problem?
>Does your child not seem to be developing normally?

Additional Links:
http://www.childrensvaccine.org/ (Spanish version)
http://www.vaccinesafety.edu/
http://www.vaccineinformation.org/
http://www.immunizationinfo.org/
http://www.partnersforimmunization.org/
References:
http://www.cdc.gov/nip/default.htm



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