



# Give it a shot.

## IMMUNIZATIONS

Getting recommended vaccinations on schedule can help you and your family prevent illnesses and stay healthy.

### > An ounce of prevention can be priceless.

Many diseases preventable by vaccines have become rare in the United States, but that doesn't mean they've disappeared. The viruses and bacteria that cause them still exist and can be spread to children and adults who haven't been immunized.

In some cases, immunization is required by law. Depending on state laws, children must often be immunized (or their parents must sign a certificate of exemption) before they can begin public school.

### > How vaccines work.

A vaccine helps your body recognize and protect against a specific disease's germs before they have a chance to make you sick. When you get a vaccine, your immune system makes antibodies, or disease-fighting cells. If you are later exposed to the actual disease, these antibodies will already be there to protect you.

Immunization is both safe and effective. A vaccine has to be tested a great deal before the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) can approve it. Once a vaccine has been approved, the manufacturer tests each individual batch for safety. The FDA and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also keep a close watch on each vaccine's safety for as long as it's used.

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## IMMUNIZATIONS

### > Get your child vaccinated.

According to the CDC, any of the diseases listed below can be fatal to a child. That's why it's important to get your child vaccinated as early as possible, at the recommended age for each immunization. Talk to your child's doctor about which vaccines your child needs:

- Bacterial meningitis
- Chickenpox (varicella)
- Diphtheria
- *Haemophilus influenzae* type B (Hib)
- Hepatitis A (for certain populations—ask your doctor)
- Hepatitis B
- Influenza (flu)
- Measles
- Pneumococcus
- Polio
- Rotavirus
- Rubella (German measles)
- Tetanus
- Whooping cough (pertussis)

Your child can receive many of these vaccines during a single visit. The vaccines are just as safe and effective when given together as when given separately. Your child's doctor can arrange a schedule of shots for your child.

### > Be a love bug, not a flu bug.

The flu is much more serious than the common cold and can lead to severe health complications. Getting a flu shot each fall is the single best way to help prevent the flu and protect yourself and those around you during flu season.

Everyone in your household should get a flu shot each year, but it's especially important for:

- Adults 50 or older
- Children 6 months to 18 years old
- Anyone with an ongoing health condition, like diabetes, heart disease, or lung disease
- Women who are pregnant during flu season
- Health care workers
- Anyone living with or caring for someone in one of these categories, or who has a child less than 6 months old

Visit [kp.org/flu](http://kp.org/flu) for more information, including where to get your free shot during flu season.

### > Travel healthy.

When you're traveling, the last thing you want is to be sick. If you're planning to travel to another country, see your doctor at least six weeks before you leave so you'll have plenty of time for any vaccinations you may need.

### > To learn more

For more information about vaccinations and immunizations at home or when planning a trip, visit [kp.org/immunizations](http://kp.org/immunizations).

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