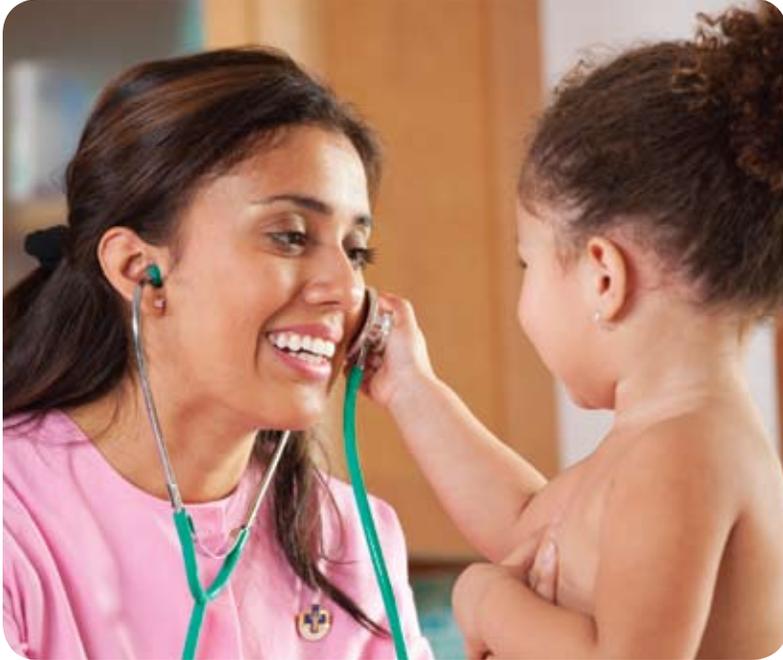


Immunizations and Vaccines



What are Immunizations?

Immunizations help protect you and your child from many bad diseases. Most are given as shots. They are also called vaccines, or vaccinations. They also help stop the spread of disease to others.

Often when you get a vaccine, you get a tiny amount of a weak or dead form of the organism that causes the disease. This amount is not enough to give you the disease. But it is enough for your immune system to attack the organism if you are ever exposed to it. Sometimes a vaccine does not fully stop the disease, but it will help you stay healthier if you do get it.

Some immunizations are given only one time, and some need “booster” shots later in life.

Why Should You Get Immunized?

- Immunizations protect you or your child from dangerous diseases.
- They help lower the spread of disease to others.
- Vaccines have very few bad side effects.
- Your child will need to get them to go to school or day care. Adults need them for work.

If you are a woman who may get pregnant, talk to your provider about what immunizations you have had and what you may need to protect your baby. And if you live with a pregnant woman, make sure your vaccines are up-to-date.

You might need other vaccines if you travel to other countries. Talk with your provider months before you leave, to see if you need shots.

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Or visit www.healthysanfrancisco.org

What Immunizations Should Children and Adolescents Get?

Ask your provider about shots for your child. The standard immunization chart includes vaccines for:

- Bacterial meningitis
- Chickenpox
- Diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis (whooping cough)
- Flu (influenza)
Only for children 6 months and older
- *Haemophilus influenzae* type b disease or Hib disease
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Human papillomavirus (HPV)
- Measles, mumps, and rubella
- Pneumococcal disease
- Polio
- Rotavirus

Immunizations start right after birth, and many are given during a baby's first 23 months. Booster shots (the later doses of some vaccines) occur throughout life. Older children, teens, and adults need shots, too.

It is important to keep a good record and a list of any reactions to the vaccines. When you sign up your child for day care or school, you may need to show proof of immunizations. Your child may also need the record later for college, work, or travel.

What Vaccines Should Adults Get?

The vaccines you need as an adult depend on many things. You may need vaccines for:

- Chickenpox
- Flu
- Hepatitis A and/or B
- Human papillomavirus (HPV)
- Measles, mumps, and rubella
- Pneumococcal disease
- Polio
- Shingles
- Tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis

What are the Side Effects of Vaccines?

Most side effects from vaccines are minor, if people have any side effects at all.

- Redness, mild swelling, or a little pain where the shot was given.
- A slight fever.
- Feeling sleepy, cranky, and not hungry.
- A mild rash 7 to 14 days after chickenpox or measles-mumps-rubella shots.

Problems like trouble breathing or a high fever are rare. If this happens, call your doctor right away.

Can Vaccines Cause Other Problems?

In the United States, vaccines are very safe. Some parents worry that thimerosal (a preservative in vaccines) might cause autism. NO link has been found between vaccines and autism. This means that giving your child any vaccine will not cause autism.

Adapted from:

www.healthwise.net/hphc/Content/StdDocument.aspx?DOCHWID=immun

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