

## CHILDHOOD VACCINATIONS

### WHAT IS A VACCINE?

A vaccine contains weakened or killed (inactivated) bacteria or viruses that stimulate the body's immune system to produce antibodies. These antibodies help protect the body when exposed to the disease in the future. If you do get sick, the symptoms are generally milder. Remember, vaccines do not and cannot cause the disease. Vaccines are often given as an injection.

### WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF VACCINATIONS?

Common side effects are:

- fatigue
- headaches
- pain, tenderness, or swelling at the injection site
- nausea or dizziness
- fever
- mild rash



These side effects are usually minor and disappear after a few days. If the symptoms do not go away or become worse, call your doctor immediately.

### WHY VACCINATE?

Vaccines help prevent the spread of diseases and protect children against serious complications from potentially life-threatening illnesses. In some cases, this can mean the difference between life and death. All children can benefit from vaccination. However, if your child has a weakened immune system, such as those on treatment for cancer, discuss your options with your doctor. Getting your child properly vaccinated is one of the most important things a parent can do for the health of their child.

### TYPES OF VACCINES

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as well as several other health organizations, recommends immunizations for 14 different diseases for children from birth through six years old. These diseases can cause a wide range of complications such as dehydration, diarrhea, vomiting, rash, fever, difficulty breathing, infection of the lungs, brain, or liver, paralysis, and even death.

Each vaccine on the childhood vaccination schedule is recommended because of the serious disease it can help to prevent. They include:

- |                                 |                |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| • Chickenpox                    | • Mumps        |
| • Diphtheria                    | • Pertussis    |
| • Haemophilus influenzae type b | • Polio        |
| • Hepatitis A                   | • Pneumococcus |
| • Hepatitis B                   | • Rotavirus    |
| • Flu                           | • Rubella      |
| • Measles                       | • Tetanus      |

## COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT VACCINES

- 1) Children might get the disease from exposure to the vaccine → Since vaccines are made from weakened or dead bacteria or viruses, they are unable to cause the disease
- 2) There are no risks for not getting vaccinated → Unvaccinated children have a greater chance of catching a preventable disease and spreading it to others.
- 3) There is no harm in waiting to receive vaccinations → The younger the age, the more susceptible children are to diseases. Delaying vaccination puts children at risk.
- 4) Natural immunity is better → Natural immunity may last a little longer than immunity gained from vaccines, however, the benefits of vaccine-acquired immunity far outweigh the risks of natural infection.
- 5) Vaccines cause autism → The causes of autism are unknown at this time. Studies have shown that there is no link between vaccines and autism, and that vaccines do not cause autism.

No vaccine is 100% effective. However, vaccines can greatly decrease the chance of catching preventable diseases, particularly when there is an outbreak. So don't delay in getting your child immunized!

For more information:

[http://www.immunize.org/vis/vis\\_english.asp](http://www.immunize.org/vis/vis_english.asp) (English)

[http://www.immunize.org/vis/vis\\_chinese.asp](http://www.immunize.org/vis/vis_chinese.asp) (Chinese)