

VACCINATIONS

What are vaccinations?

Vaccinations (vaccines or “shots”) are medications, usually in the form of a shot, that can help prevent serious diseases.



What diseases can vaccines prevent?

Vaccines can protect against measles, mumps, rubella, influenza, hepatitis B, hepatitis A, polio, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), Hib disease, chicken-pox, rotavirus, pneumococcal disease, meningococcal, and human papilloma virus. Vaccines don't protect children from minor illnesses like colds, but they can keep children safe from many serious diseases.

Is it safe to vaccinate my child?

In the great majority of cases, vaccines cause minimal side effects. The most common side effects of vaccines are pain, redness, and swelling at the site of injection, and mild fever. Side effects that are less common, but more serious, include allergic reactions and seizures.

What else should I know about vaccinations?

- Your doctor should provide you information about the benefits and risks of each vaccine before your child gets shots. Take time to read it before your child is vaccinated and ask your health care provider if you have questions.
- Keep track of your child's shots. Start a shot record with your child's first vaccinations and update it at each vaccination visit. If you move or change providers, having a record can help prevent your child from getting extra shots.
- Tell your health care provider if your child has any illness, health problems, or allergies. Ask your doctor to give your child a physical exam to make sure your child is healthy before he receives a vaccination.
- If you think your child is experiencing a reaction, call your doctor or nurse right away. Write down what happened, the date, and time. Ask your doctor to file a report. Children who have had a severe reaction to a vaccine should not receive another dose.

Please talk to your health care provider.

This card does not substitute the advice of a qualified health care provider.

If you need additional information, contact the Family Health Line at 1-800-451-BABY (2229)

How can I comfort my child during and after vaccinations?

- Your child will need extra love and attention during and after shots.
- Rock, breastfeed, hold, and talk to your child in a soothing voice. Provide your child's favorite blanket or stuffed animal.
- Stay calm. Your child will notice your feelings.
- Be honest and reassure your child. Tell him/her it may hurt, but it will only last a few seconds.
- Allow your child to cry; don't force him/her to be brave.
- Help distract your child with stories, songs, or looking at the scenery.
- A clean, cool washcloth over the injection site can help soothe redness and tenderness.
- Ask your doctor for advice on using a non-aspirin pain reliever when you get home. **DO NOT USE ASPIRIN.**

What if I can't afford vaccinations for my child?

The Miami-Dade County Health Department administers free immunizations to children between the ages of 2 months through 18 years, and for a fee to adults. For more information and clinic locations, please contact the Miami-Dade County Health Department, Special Immunization Program at 786-845-0550 or www.dadehealth.org.

What if I choose to delay or withhold vaccinations for my child?

We strongly encourage you to vaccinate your child, but ultimately the decision is yours. Florida state law dictates that all children must be vaccinated to participate in daycare and school, unless it conflicts with a person's religious beliefs or there is a medical reason. A religious exemption certificate (form DH 681) is available at county health departments.

Vaccination Resources

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) www.cdc.gov/vaccines or 1-800-232-4636. This operates 24 hours/day in English & Spanish.
- Immunization Action Coalition www.vaccineinformation.org or 1-651-647-9009.



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