

Speak Up™ About Vaccinations



Vaccines are life-saving tools that reduce the risk of serious illness or death due to infection from viruses or bacteria. Getting vaccinated is a personal health decision. Like all important decisions, you should get the best information you can to make an informed choice.

Here are some things you should know about vaccines and vaccination:

- Vaccines are rigorously tested before the U.S. Food and Drug Administration gives approval.
- Protection from vaccination may fade over time, requiring multiple doses at various points in a patient’s life. That may mean a second dose is needed in several months or years.
- Delaying childhood vaccinations may put those children and others at greater risk for diseases.
- There is no data to support the myth that vaccinations cause autism in children.



Some questions to ask your doctor or other health care provider about vaccines:

- How effective is the vaccine?
- What are the potential side effects after receiving the vaccine?
- Are there any consequences if I don’t get vaccinated and become infected with the disease or bacteria?
- What are the chances of contracting a disease or bacteria based on location, such as when traveling to a different country?
- What is the likelihood of being exposed to a certain disease or bacteria that could lead to infection based on living conditions, such as moving into a college dormitory?



The following vaccinations are recommended at different points of a person’s life to prevent certain diseases:

Birth to 18 years



- Chickenpox
- COVID-19 (For 6 months or older, refer to CDC for the latest guidelines and up-to-date recommendations)
- Dengue
- Haemophilus influenzae type B (Hib)
- Hepatitis A and B
- Human papillomavirus (HPV)
- Measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR)
- Meningitis
- Pneumococcal conjugate
- Polio
- Rotavirus
- Tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis



19 years and older



- Chickenpox
- COVID-19
- Hepatitis A and B
- Hib
- HPV
- Influenza
- MMR
- Meningitis
- Pneumococcal (for those 50 and older)
- Shingles (for those 50 and older)
- Tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) and the [World Health Organization](#) have resources available on vaccinations. Speak Up and talk to your doctor or other health care provider about the vaccinations that may be appropriate for you.



How vaccines work

Vaccines work by imitating an infection and building a person’s immunity. The vaccine places a small “inactive” or weakened form of a bacteria or virus into the body so that when the actual bacteria or virus is introduced to the person their body recognizes it and works to ward off infection. This helps prevent infection or keeps the person from being as sick as they could be if they were not vaccinated.



The goal of Speak Up™ is to help patients and their advocates become active in their care.

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