

# Top Ten Reasons to Protect Your Child by Vaccinating

*Here are the top ten reasons to protect your child by vaccinating him or her against serious diseases.*

**1** Parents want to do everything possible to make sure their children are healthy and protected from preventable diseases. Vaccination is the best way to do that.

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**2** Vaccination protects children from serious illness and complications of vaccine-preventable diseases which can include amputation of an arm or leg, paralysis of limbs, hearing loss, convulsions, brain damage, and death.

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**3** Vaccine-preventable diseases, such as measles, mumps, and whooping cough, are still a threat. They continue to infect U.S. children, resulting in hospitalizations and deaths every year.

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**4** Though vaccination has led to a dramatic decline in the number of U.S. cases of several infectious diseases, some of these diseases are quite common in other countries and are brought to the U.S. by international travelers. If children are not vaccinated, they could easily get one of these diseases from a traveler or while traveling themselves.

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**5** Outbreaks of preventable diseases occur when many parents decide not to vaccinate their children.

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**6** Vaccination is safe and effective. All vaccines undergo long and careful review by scientists, doctors, and the federal government to make sure they are safe.

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**7** Organizations such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Family Physicians, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention all strongly support protecting children with recommended vaccinations.

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**8** Vaccination protects others you care about, including family members, friends, and grandparents.

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**9** If children aren't vaccinated, they can spread disease to other children who are too young to be vaccinated or to people with weakened immune systems, such as transplant recipients and people with cancer. This could result in long-term complications and even death for these vulnerable people.

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**10** We all have a public health commitment to our communities to protect each other and each other's children by vaccinating our own family members.

# then...

- *Your child will be left at risk of catching the disease.*
- *Your child will be an infectious disease threat to others.*
- *Your child may have to be excluded from school or child care.*

## what to do . . .

We strongly encourage you to immunize your child. Please discuss any concerns you have with a trusted healthcare provider or call the immunization coordinator at your local or state health department. Your vaccination decision affects not only the health of your child, but also all of your family, your child's friends and their families, and your community.

For more information about vaccines, go to

- Immunization Action Coalition  
[www.immunize.org](http://www.immunize.org)  
and [www.vaccineinformation.org](http://www.vaccineinformation.org)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
[www.cdc.gov/vaccines](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines)  
CDC-INFO Contact Center: (800) 232-4636
- American Academy of Pediatrics  
[www.aap.org/immunization](http://www.aap.org/immunization)
- National Network for Immunization Information  
[www.nnii.org](http://www.nnii.org)
- Vaccine Education Center at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia  
[www.vaccine.chop.edu](http://www.vaccine.chop.edu)

#### **Immunization Action Coalition**

1573 Selby Avenue, Suite 234  
Saint Paul, MN 55104  
phone: (651) 647-9009  
fax: (651) 647-9131  
[www.immunize.org](http://www.immunize.org)  
[www.vaccineinformation.org](http://www.vaccineinformation.org)

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What if you don't immunize your child?

# What if . . .

*What if you don't immunize*

*your child? Parents, please*

*consider the consequences of*

*not immunizing your child.*

*Your vaccination decision*

*affects not only the health of*

*your child, but also the health*

*of your family, your child's*

*friends and their families,*

*and your community.*



- **Without immunizations your child is at risk for catching a vaccine-preventable disease.**

Vaccines were developed to protect people from dangerous and often fatal diseases. Vaccines are safe and effective, and vaccine-preventable diseases are still a threat.

- Influenza or “flu” is a serious respiratory disease that can be deadly. Healthy infants and toddlers are especially vulnerable to the complications of influenza. Tragically, every year in the United States children die from influenza.
- Pertussis or “whooping cough” is an extremely dangerous disease for infants. It is not easily treated and can result in permanent brain damage or death. Since the 1980s, the number of cases of pertussis has increased, especially among babies younger than 6 months and teenagers. In 2010, several states reported an increase in cases and outbreaks of pertussis, including a state-wide epidemic in California. Many infants died from whooping cough during this epidemic.
- Measles is dangerous and very contagious. It is still common in many countries and is easily brought into the United States by returning vacationers and foreign visitors. The number of reported measles cases began to decline rapidly during the 1990s. Recently, vaccine hesitancy among parents in the United States and abroad has led to a growing number of children and teens who are under-vaccinated and thus, unprotected from measles. Unfor-

tunately, measles cases are on the rise across this country and worldwide.

- Chickenpox is very contagious. Before the development of a vaccine, about 100 people died every year in the United States from chickenpox. Most were previously healthy. Children with chickenpox need to be kept out of day care or school for a week or more so they don't spread the disease to others.

- **Without immunizations your child can infect others.**

Children who are not immunized can readily transmit vaccine-preventable diseases throughout the community.

- Unvaccinated children can pass diseases on to babies who are too young to be fully immunized.
- Unvaccinated children pose a threat to children and adults who can't be immunized for medical reasons. This includes people with leukemia and other cancers, immune system problems, and people receiving treatment or medications that suppress their immune system.
- Unvaccinated children can infect the small percentage of children who do not mount an immune response to vaccination.

- **Without immunizations your child may have to be excluded from school or child care.**

During disease outbreaks, unimmunized children may be excluded from school or child care until the outbreak is over. This is for their own protection and the protection of others. It can cause hardship for the child and parent.

# Vaccines work!

## CDC statistics demonstrate dramatic declines in vaccine-preventable diseases when compared with the pre-vaccine era

DISEASE	PRE-VACCINE ERA ESTIMATED ANNUAL MORBIDITY*	MOST RECENT REPORTS OR ESTIMATES† OF U.S. CASES	PERCENT DECREASE
Diphtheria	21,053	0†	100%
<i>H. influenzae</i> (invasive, <5 years of age)	20,000	31‡	>99%
Hepatitis A	117,333	2,890§	98%
Hepatitis B (acute)	66,232	18,800§	72%
Measles	530,217	187†	>99%
Mumps	162,344	584†	>99%
Pertussis	200,752	28,639†	86%
Pneumococcal disease (invasive, <5 years of age)	16,069	1,900‡‡	88%
Polio (paralytic)	16,316	1†	>99%
Rotavirus (hospitalizations, <3 years of age)	62,500**	12,500††	80%
Rubella	47,745	9†	>99%
Congenital Rubella Syndrome	152	1†	99%
Smallpox	29,005	0†	100%
Tetanus	580	26†	96%
Varicella	4,085,120	167,490§§	96%

\* CDC. *JAMA* November 14, 2007; 298(18):2155–63.

† CDC. *MMWR* August 15, 2014; 63(32):702–15.

‡ An additional 10 cases of Hib are estimated to have occurred among the 185 reports of Hib (<5 years) with unknown serotype.

§ CDC. Viral Hepatitis Surveillance – United States, 2011.

\*\* CDC. *MMWR*, February 6, 2009; 58(RR-2):1–25.

‡‡ CDC. Active Bacterial Core Surveillance, 2013 data (unpublished).

†† CDC. New Vaccine Surveillance Network, 2013 data (unpublished); U.S. rotavirus disease now has a biennial pattern.

§§ CDC. Varicella Program, 2013 data (unpublished).