

# Talking to Parents About Infant Vaccines



Parents consider you their most trusted source of information when it comes to vaccines. When talking to parents about vaccines, make a strong, effective recommendation and allow time for parents to ask questions. Hearing your answers to their questions can help parents feel more confident vaccinating their child according to CDC's recommended immunization schedule.

**Are vaccines safe for my child?**

Yes. Millions of children safely receive vaccines each year. The U.S. has a long-standing vaccine safety system that ensures vaccines are as safe as possible.

No. Many people want answers about the causes of autism — including me. But well designed and conducted studies that I can share with you show that MMR vaccine is not a cause of autism.

**Is there a link between vaccines and autism?**

**Can vaccines overload my baby's immune system?**

No. Vaccines help babies fight infections by introducing a small number of antigens into their bodies. Antigens are parts of germs that cause babies' immune systems to go to work. Vaccines contain only a tiny fraction of the antigens that babies encounter in their environment every day.

We vaccinate children early because they are susceptible to diseases at a young age. Young children also have the highest risks of complications that could lead to hospitalization or death.

**Why do vaccines start so early?**

**Don't infants have natural immunity? Isn't natural immunity better than the kind from vaccines?**

Babies may get some temporary immunity from mom during pregnancy, but these antibodies do not last long, leaving your baby vulnerable to disease if you don't vaccinate him/her.

There is no data to support that spacing out vaccines offers safe or effective protection from these diseases. Any time you delay a vaccine, you leave your baby vulnerable to disease. It's really best to stay on schedule.

**What do you think of delaying some vaccines or following a non-standard schedule?**

**Do I have to vaccinate my baby on schedule if I'm breastfeeding him?**

Yes. Breast milk provides important protection from some infections as your baby's immune system is developing, but breast milk does not protect children against all diseases.

Getting every dose of each vaccine provides your child with the best protection. Depending on the vaccine, he/she may need more than one dose to build high enough immunity to prevent disease or to boost immunity that fades over time.

**Why are so many doses needed for each vaccine?**

**My child is sick right now. Is it okay for her to still get shots?**

Tell me what's going on. Usually, children can get vaccinated even if they have a mild illness like a cold, earache, mild fever, or diarrhea.

Most vaccine side effects are very minor, like soreness where the shot was given, fussiness, or a low-grade fever. These typically only last a couple of days and are treatable. Serious reactions are very rare. If your child experiences any reactions that concern you, call us.

**What are the side effects of the vaccines?**

For more information, visit  
[cdc.gov/vaccines/conversations](https://cdc.gov/vaccines/conversations)