



Vaccine Information for Parents

2026



Frequently Asked Questions: Vaccinating Your Child



Why are vaccines still necessary?

Diseases like measles, whooping cough, and chickenpox haven't gone away. If your child isn't vaccinated, they are more likely to get sick, and the illness can become serious. When fewer people are vaccinated, these illnesses can spread quickly and affect a lot of families.



Are vaccines safe?

Vaccines are carefully tested before they are given and continue to be checked for safety. Most side effects are mild, like a sore arm or low fever, and go away quickly. Serious reactions are very rare, and the diseases they prevent are much more dangerous.



Can I spread out or skip vaccinations for my child?

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) designed the vaccine schedule to protect kids at the right times. If you delay or spread-out shots, your child may not be protected when it matters most, and they could get sick or pass illness to others.



Vaccines for
Children Program



AAP Recommended
Vaccination Schedule

For more information on vaccines, visit nj.gov/health/vaccines

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Are the ingredients in vaccines safe?

Yes. Vaccine ingredients are used in very small, safe amounts. Each part has a job like helping the body build protection or keeping the vaccine stable. They're carefully tested. Safety is checked all the time, and the amounts used are far below anything that could cause harm.



Could taking vitamins, exercising, and having a healthy diet replace the need for vaccines?

No. Healthy habits are important, but they can't replace vaccines. Eating well and staying active helps keep your child strong, but vaccines are what teach the body how to fight specific diseases. For the best protection, you need both.



What if I can't afford to vaccinate my child?

The Vaccines for Children (VFC) program is a federally funded program that provides vaccines at no cost to children whose families cannot afford to pay. For more information about VFC, visit nj.gov/health/vaccines/programs/vfc or scan the QR code below.



Vaccines for Children
(VFC) Program



AAP Recommended
Vaccination Schedule



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How to Make Vaccinations Less Stressful for Your Child



Comfort them with a favorite toy, book, or blanket.



Distract your child by cuddling them, singing, or talking softly.



Smile and let them know that everything is OK.



Take deep breaths with your older child to help with fear and discomfort while they are getting the shot.



Remind them that we get vaccines to stay healthy.



Do not scold your child for being frightened or for crying; instead, give them comfort and support.

To stay current with your child's vaccination schedule, scan the QR code below.



For more information on vaccines, visit nj.gov/health/vaccines

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Vaccine Information: Where can we find the truth?

1

Check the source

- Use trusted health organizations like the American Academy of Pediatrics or the Immunization Action Coalition.
- Make sure the author is a medical expert, not an influencer or celebrity.

2

Check the information

- Make sure the information is up to date.
- Look for clear, professional writing (not lots of errors).
- Look for data, not just opinions.
- See if other trusted sources say the same thing.
- Watch for one-sided messages or "miracle cure" claims.
- Question messages that promote conspiracies (example: claims that doctors or the government are hiding "the truth").
- Be mindful of messages that use scary or dramatic words to get your attention (like "toxic" or "dangerous").

3

Ask questions

- If you have doubts about the message, don't share it.
- If you are unsure about the information, talk to your health care provider.

4

Vaccine Information Resources

- [aap.org](https://www.aap.org)
- [voicesforvaccines.org/resources](https://www.voicesforvaccines.org/resources)
- [vaccineinformation.org](https://www.vaccineinformation.org)



Tips for Staying Up to Date on Vaccines

-  Schedule well-child visits and follow the recommended vaccine schedule when making your child's vaccination appointments.¹
-  Keep track of your children's vaccines by enrolling in the New Jersey Immunization Information Service (NJiIS).²
-  If you or someone you know needs assistance with paying for children's vaccinations, visit the Vaccines for Children Program (VFC) website to see if you qualify.³
-  To avoid delays in starting school, preschool or daycare, know what your school and state guidelines are regarding vaccinations.⁴
-  Be a good example for your children by making sure you and other adult family members are also up to date with their vaccinations.

1. [AAP Immunization Schedule](#)
2. [njiis.nj.gov/docs/NJiIS_Your_Best_Shot](#)
3. [nj.gov/health/vaccines/programs/vfc](#)
4. [nj.gov/health/cd/imm_requirements](#)



Stay Up to Date and Vaccinate

Getting your children vaccinated on time can help them stay healthy as they grow older.



Get Early Protection

Vaccinate before your child is exposed to dangerous diseases. Waiting until school begins may not allow enough time for vaccines to work.



Attend School and Activities without Delay

Vaccinate your children on time so they can start the new school year, join a sports team or group activities, and travel without delay.



Avoid Disease-Related Complications

Some diseases can cause serious complications (e.g., meningitis can lead to hearing loss, COVID-19 can lead to trouble breathing). Getting vaccinated can help prevent these long-term problems from happening.



Prevent the Spread of Illness

Getting vaccinated helps prevent the spread of illness and protect loved ones and other community members, especially those who are too young to be vaccinated or those who are at high-risk for disease.



Stay Protected

The immunization schedule is carefully designed to provide protection at just the right time. Some vaccines need to be given more than once to maximize your child's protection.

Protect Your Children with Vaccines



Locations for vaccination:

- Your health care provider
- Local health department
- Federally Qualified Health Centers

**To see if you qualify for the
Vaccines for Children program, visit:**

nj.gov/health/vaccines/programs/vfc

