



Frequently Asked Questions: Vaccinating Your Child

Most parents choose to vaccinate their children* but some still have questions. Please see the information below to learn how vaccines will help to keep your child healthy.



Why are vaccines still necessary? Haven't we gotten rid of most of these diseases that cause serious illness in the US?

- Vaccine-preventable diseases like measles, whooping cough, and chickenpox have not gone away entirely.
- When vaccines are skipped, people are at risk for becoming sick or developing severe illness.
- If fewer people get vaccinated, the small number of cases that we have could increase greatly.



Are vaccines safe?

- Yes, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Food and Drug Association (FDA) take many steps to ensure that vaccines are safe before and after people begin to use them.
- Vaccines can take years to become licensed, but once they are, systems like the Vaccine Adverse Events Reporting System (VAERS) and the Vaccine Safety Datalink (VSD) are used to check on vaccine safety.
- Vaccine side effects are mild (e.g., soreness where the shot was given, low grade fever) and usually last only a few days. Serious side effects from vaccines are uncommon and much less severe than the diseases they prevent.

*For the CDC's children's vaccine schedule, visit [cdc.gov/vaccines/imz-schedules](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/imz-schedules)





Can I spread out or skip vaccinations for my child?

- The CDC recommended vaccine schedule is specifically designed to protect your child from 17 potentially serious diseases at exactly the right time.
- Delaying or spreading out vaccine doses leaves your child unprotected during the time when they need vaccine protection the most, which can leave them at higher risk for getting sick and spreading illness to others in their home or community.



Will the ingredients in vaccines harm my child?

- Vaccines use only the ingredients they need to be as safe and effective as possible. Vaccine ingredients are safe and used in tiny amounts, and serve a specific purpose (e.g., help make the vaccine more effective and long-lasting).
- Many of the ingredients in vaccines help to provide immunity (protection) against a specific disease and are commonly found in our own bodies or in foods that we eat.



Could vitamins, exercise and a healthy diet replace vaccinating my child?

- Although a healthy lifestyle is important, it is not enough to keep children from getting very sick from vaccine- preventable illnesses.
- Following the CDC's recommended vaccination schedule will also help provide immunity (protection) from vaccine-preventable illnesses.



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/.

For more information about vaccines for your children, visit cdc.gov/vaccines-/parents/index.html

