

# All About the AAP Recommended Immunization Schedule

Your pediatrician cares about your child's health and development. To help keep kids healthy, they follow the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Recommended Child and Adolescent Immunization Schedule.



**You can view and download the 2026 AAP vaccine recommendations by age here:**

- **Birth through 6 years** ([https://downloads.aap.org/HC/EN/childvaccineschedule.pdf?\\_gl=1%2a100v5uy%2a\\_ga%2aMTI1NzUyNDI2MS4xNzY2MTY5NTg0%2a\\_ga\\_FD9D3XZVQQ%2aczE3NjkxMDA5NjgkbzQxJGcxJHQxNzY5MTAzNTEzJGo2MCRsMCRoMA..](https://downloads.aap.org/HC/EN/childvaccineschedule.pdf?_gl=1%2a100v5uy%2a_ga%2aMTI1NzUyNDI2MS4xNzY2MTY5NTg0%2a_ga_FD9D3XZVQQ%2aczE3NjkxMDA5NjgkbzQxJGcxJHQxNzY5MTAzNTEzJGo2MCRsMCRoMA..))
- **7 through 18 years** ([https://downloads.aap.org/HC/EN/adolescentvaccineschedule.pdf?\\_gl=1%2aqq372o%2a\\_ga%2aMTI1NzUyNDI2MS4xNzY2MTY5NTg0%2a\\_ga\\_FD9D3XZVQQ%2aczE3NjkxMDA5NjgkbzQxJGcxJHQxNzY5MTAzNDQ1JGo2MCRsMCRoMA..](https://downloads.aap.org/HC/EN/adolescentvaccineschedule.pdf?_gl=1%2aqq372o%2a_ga%2aMTI1NzUyNDI2MS4xNzY2MTY5NTg0%2a_ga_FD9D3XZVQQ%2aczE3NjkxMDA5NjgkbzQxJGcxJHQxNzY5MTAzNDQ1JGo2MCRsMCRoMA..))

The AAP schedule provides the latest trusted guidance on when children (/English/safety-prevention/immunizations/Pages/Your-Babys-First-Vaccines.aspx) and teens (/English/safety-prevention/immunizations/Pages/Immunizations-for-Teenagers-and-Young-Adults.aspx) should receive each immunization. Every vaccine included has been thoroughly reviewed (/English/news/Pages/AAP-releases-its-own-evidence-based-immunization-schedule.aspx) and licensed (/English/safety-prevention/immunizations/Pages/how-vaccines-are-developed-tested-for-safety-and-approved-step-by-step.aspx) by the Food and Drug Administration.

## Why should all U.S. children and teens follow the AAP recommended vaccine schedule?

**The AAP schedule is considered the ideal timeline for healthy children** as their immune system develops. Following the AAP schedule helps babies, children and teens stay ahead of serious, preventable diseases such as measles (/English/safety-prevention/immunizations/Pages/how-to-protect-your-children-during-a-measles-outbreak.aspx) and pertussis (/English/health-issues/conditions/chest-lungs/Pages/Whooping-Cough.aspx) (whooping cough), as well as respiratory viruses such as respiratory syncytial virus (/English/health-issues/conditions/chest-lungs/Pages/RSV-When-Its-More-Than-Just-a-Cold.aspx) (RSV), influenza (/English/health-issues/conditions/flu/Pages/which-flu-vaccine-should-my-child-get-this-year.aspx) and COVID (/English/health-issues/conditions/COVID-19/Pages/when-can-kids-get-the-COVID-vaccine-or-booster.aspx).

Twelve national organizations representing more than 1 million clinicians, physicians, pharmacists and other pediatric health care professionals agree with the AAP immunization schedule. These groups endorse it:

American Academy of Family Physicians

American College of Nurse Midwives

- American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
- American Medical Association
- American Pharmacists Association
- Council of Medical Specialty Societies
- Infectious Diseases Society of America
- National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
- National Medical Association
- Pediatric Infectious Diseases Society
- Pediatric Pharmacy Association
- Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine

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When everyone is vaccinated, diseases have a hard time spreading. It helps keep your child healthy while also protecting others in the community who cannot get vaccinated.

## Why is the AAP immunization schedule different from the federal schedule?

In January 2026, federal officials suddenly stopped recommending several childhood vaccines. They did this after a brief review of some other countries' practices. The action breaks from a process designed to carefully review and recommend childhood vaccines—one that considers risks from specific diseases in the U.S., health impacts and how our health care system works. The **AAP continues to recommend** (</English/news/Pages/AAPs-recommended-childhood-and-adolescent-immunization-schedule-for-2026.aspx>) that U.S. children be immunized against these diseases. Read more about the differences in recommendations [here](/English/tips-tools/ask-the-pediatrician/Pages/what-is-the-difference-between-the-AAP-recommended-immunization-schedule-and-other-vaccine-schedules.aspx) (</English/tips-tools/ask-the-pediatrician/Pages/what-is-the-difference-between-the-AAP-recommended-immunization-schedule-and-other-vaccine-schedules.aspx>).

Why Pediatricians Follow the Vaccine Schedule Recommended by Experts | AAP



**A vaccine may be given in one or more doses.**

**The timing for each dose of a vaccine is based on:**

- what age a child's immune system provides optimal protection after vaccination, and
- the earliest possible time to provide protection balanced with the age the child is at highest risk for a disease.

Pediatric researchers are always studying how long vaccine protection lasts, how many doses we need and how much time between doses works best. That is why your child needs the flu shot every year, but for another vaccine, they may develop lifelong protection from two or more doses spaced months or years apart.

There are very few reasons to vary from the recommended immunization schedule

([https://www.aap.org/immunizationschedule?](https://www.aap.org/immunizationschedule?_gl=1%2a1rdnbl2%2a_ga%2aMTI1NzUyNDI2MS4xNzY2MTY5NTg0%2a_ga_FD9D3XZVQQ%2aczE3NjkxMDA5NjgkbzQxJGcxJHQxNzY5MTAzNDQ1JGo2MCRsMCRoMA..)

[\\_gl=1%2a1rdnbl2%2a\\_ga%2aMTI1NzUyNDI2MS4xNzY2MTY5NTg0%2a\\_ga\\_FD9D3XZVQQ%2aczE3NjkxMDA5NjgkbzQxJGcxJHQxNzY5MTAzNDQ1JGo2MCRsMCRoMA..](https://www.aap.org/immunizationschedule?_gl=1%2a1rdnbl2%2a_ga%2aMTI1NzUyNDI2MS4xNzY2MTY5NTg0%2a_ga_FD9D3XZVQQ%2aczE3NjkxMDA5NjgkbzQxJGcxJHQxNzY5MTAzNDQ1JGo2MCRsMCRoMA..)). For example, if your child has a chronic condition or takes medicine that weakens their immune system, they may need additional doses or a different type of vaccine.

The AAP constantly reviews the data and makes science-based decisions on the recommended timing for vaccines. Your pediatrician stays updated about any changes to the AAP immunization schedule (</English/safety-prevention/immunizations/Pages/History-of-Immunizations.aspx>).

## Can the shots be spread out over a longer period of time?

For several reasons, it's not recommended to spread out vaccines over a longer period of time. Spreading out vaccines leaves your child's immune system waiting to learn when it could be getting ahead of preventable diseases. On-time immunization is important to maximize your child's protection against infections. The pace has a purpose.

## Why alternative vaccine schedules are not good for kids

The AAP recommended schedule is designed (</English/safety-prevention/immunizations/Pages/History-of-Immunizations.aspx>) to work best with a child's immune system at certain ages and at specific times between doses. There is no research to show that a child would be equally protected against diseases with a different schedule, or that spreading out shots more would be safer. But we do know that any length of time without immunizations is a time without protection against vaccine preventable diseases.

## What if my child missed a shot or is behind schedule?

Getting your child vaccinated on the recommended schedule is the best way to keep them healthy. If your child misses a shot, you don't need to start over. Call your pediatrician's office. They can explain which shots your child can get to stay up to date and help set up your child's next visit.

Does it overwhelm a child's immune system to give multiple shots in one visit?

No. Multiple shots in one visit don't overwhelm your child's immune system. We know multiple shots (</English/safety-prevention/immunizations/Pages/Multiple-Vaccinations-at-One-Time.aspx>) can be given together effectively and safely. Each childhood vaccine has been carefully tested on its own and in combination with others.

The AAP schedule is based on the times when the vaccines work best with children's immune systems. Sometimes, this means that your child will get multiple shots in a short period of time.

## Why does my child still need a vaccine if these diseases are mostly gone?

Smallpox is the only disease that has been eliminated completely by vaccines.

We still need vaccines for the other diseases that can spread in our communities. Vaccines prepare the body's immune system to resist contagious diseases.

For example, the measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine has worked very well in the U.S. for decades. Lately, vaccination rates have dipped (<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/measles/new-us-map-mmr-vaccine-uptake-reveals-considerable-gaps-potential-more-measles>). This has allowed outbreaks of measles (</English/safety-prevention/immunizations/Pages/how-to-protect-your-children-during-a-measles-outbreak.aspx>) to spread across the country.

5, the U.S. had the most measles infections in over 30 years. Most of the people who got measles were not ited.

## What is community immunity?

When most people in the community have immunity to a disease, it is less likely for that disease to spread.

It is because of vaccines and community immunity (</English/safety-prevention/immunizations/Pages/Vaccine-Protection-How-Healthy-is-Your-Community.aspx>) that children rarely get serious diseases like tetanus, measles, rubella and polio. We cannot predict which children will have a mild case and who will get severely sick when infected. So, we need to continue using every tool to protect children, including vaccines.

## Should my child get vaccines if they are sick?

If your child is sick, talk with your pediatrician. Often, they can still get vaccinated even if they have a mild illness like a cold, earache, low fever or diarrhea. Receiving vaccines that same day saves time because your child will not need an extra appointment. Your pediatrician will be happy to talk with you about this.

## Can you get a disease from a vaccine?

A vaccine does not cause disease in healthy people. If the virus or bacteria is used as an ingredient in the vaccine (</English/safety-prevention/immunizations/Pages/Vaccine-Ingredients-Frequently-Asked-Questions.aspx>), it is either not alive or very, very weak.

Vaccines have active ingredients (</English/safety-prevention/immunizations/Pages/Vaccine-Ingredients-Frequently-Asked-Questions.aspx>) that give information to your child's immune system, so it knows how to create its own antibodies. Here's how that works.

Just like a child learns to read, their immune system learns, too. A vaccine is like a book that teaches the immune system to recognize and resist a disease. All it takes is a tiny amount of active ingredients in each vaccine for the immune system to understand and remember what to do when it sees the actual virus or bacteria.

There are some vaccines that use a live, weakened virus. This type of vaccine very rarely can cause disease for people who have illnesses affecting their immune system such as cancer, or who require medicine that affects their immune system. Because of this, their doctor may instead provide a different form of the vaccine or advise them to not get that one vaccine. (Learn why it's important for your child to get recommended vaccines to attend school or child care (</English/ages-stages/gradeschool/school/Pages/Back-to-School-Back-to-the-Doctor.aspx>.)

## Do vaccines cause autism?

No, vaccines do not cause autism. Children get several vaccines between ages one and two. This is also the time some children start to show symptoms of autism. Although they happen around the same time, one does not cause the other. Medical researchers across the globe have spent more than 25 years thoroughly studying this claim. All have come to the same **conclusion:** (</English/safety-prevention/immunizations/pages/vaccine-studies-examine-the-evidence.aspx>) Vaccines are not linked to autism.

## What if my child has a side effect from a vaccine?

Mild side effects, such as redness, swelling and pain at the site of injection, are common. Sometimes when you get a vaccine, you may get a low fever or your body aches. This is a sign your body is developing immunity to the disease. The side effects go away shortly after the vaccine.

Very rarely, serious reactions can occur from a vaccine. But the risk of the disease itself is far greater and far more common than serious reactions from vaccines.

# Remember

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As a parent, you know your child and what they need to thrive. Your pediatrician has medical training, special knowledge and scientific evidence about how to support your child's health. Working together, you can make informed decisions about what's best for your child. If you have questions about vaccines or anything else, talk with your pediatrician.

## More information

- [AAP Releases Recommended Childhood and Adolescent Immunization Schedule for 2026 \(/English/news/Pages/AAPs-recommended-childhood-and-adolescent-immunization-schedule-for-2026.aspx\)](#)
- [What is the difference between the AAP recommended immunizations and other vaccine schedules? \(/English/tips-tools/ask-the-pediatrician/Pages/what-is-the-difference-between-the-AAP-recommended-immunization-schedule-and-other-vaccine-schedules.aspx\)](#)
- [How Vaccine Schedules Changed Over Time & Why \(/English/safety-prevention/immunizations/Pages/History-of-Immunizations.aspx\)](#)
- [Vaccines Your Child Needs By Age 6 \(/English/safety-prevention/immunizations/Pages/Your-Babys-First-Vaccines.aspx\)](#)
- [Vaccines for Tweens, Teens & Young Adults \(/English/safety-prevention/immunizations/Pages/Immunizations-for-Teenagers-and-Young-Adults.aspx\)](#)

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