



## How the vaccine schedule keeps kids safe: Suggested talking points

- **All children need specific vaccines at certain ages so they can have protection when they need it most.**
  - Vaccines teach children's immune systems how to fight off dangerous diseases *before* they're exposed to germs.
  - The [recommended vaccine schedule](#) ensures that children receive vaccines when their immune systems are mature enough to respond adequately and when they're most at risk of getting very sick.
  - The vaccine schedule is set by doctors to confirm that vaccines are safe and provide kids with the most benefit.
  - Children who receive vaccines at recommended times have protection against 16 diseases, including some that can cause paralysis, brain damage, and even death.
  - Over the past 30 years, it's estimated that recommended childhood vaccines have [prevented 32 million hospitalizations](#) and saved 1.1 million lives in the United States alone.
- **Children who don't follow the vaccine schedule are at risk of catching diseases like measles and whooping cough, which are especially dangerous for babies and kids.**
  - Childhood vaccination rates are declining, with many parents citing [unfounded safety concerns](#). However, vaccines are rigorously tested before they're approved, and severe side effects are extremely rare.
  - When kids aren't vaccinated, [disease outbreaks occur](#), which affects the whole community.
  - Plus, unvaccinated kids can put vulnerable family members at risk, like newborns who are too young to get vaccinated and older adults.
- **If your children aren't up to date on vaccines, it's not too late to get back on track.**
  - Learn when children should receive recommended vaccines and how many doses they need [from the CDC](#). Your child's pediatrician can provide more information about getting up to date on vaccines.
  - Children can get this season's flu vaccine and the updated COVID-19 vaccine now. If children were recently infected by COVID-19, they can wait three months since their last COVID-19 infection. Older kids can get vaccinated [at most pharmacies](#), while young children and babies may need to get vaccinated by their pediatrician.
  - Routine vaccines are covered by most insurance plans. Children who are uninsured, Medicaid-eligible, American Indian, or Alaska Natives can get vaccinated for free through the CDC's [Vaccines for Children Program](#).



## How the vaccine schedule keeps kids safe: Frequently asked questions

### 1. Why do doctors recommend that kids follow the vaccine schedule?

Vaccines teach children's immune systems how to fight off dangerous diseases before they're exposed to germs. The [recommended vaccine schedule](#) ensures that children receive vaccines when their immune systems are mature enough to respond adequately and when they're most at risk of getting very sick.

Children who receive vaccines at recommended times have protection against 16 diseases, including some that can cause paralysis, brain damage, and even death.

Those who don't follow the vaccine schedule are at risk of catching diseases like [measles](#) and [whooping cough](#), which are especially dangerous for babies and kids. Unvaccinated kids can also put vulnerable family members at risk, like newborns who are too young to get vaccinated and older adults.

### 2. Are recommended vaccines safe?

Yes. Vaccines are rigorously tested before they're approved for any age group, and severe side effects [are extremely rare](#). Plus, the risk of health complications from vaccine-preventable diseases is much higher than the risk of complications from vaccines themselves.

Most kids will only experience mild pain and a bit of swelling at the injection site.

### 3. Where can children get vaccinated now, and how much do vaccines cost?

Children can get routine vaccines as well as this season's flu and COVID-19 vaccines, at your pediatrician's office. Older kids can get some vaccines [at pharmacies](#).

Learn when children should receive recommended vaccines and how many doses they need [from the CDC](#). Your child's pediatrician can provide more information about getting up to date on vaccines.

Routine vaccines are covered by most insurance plans. Children who are uninsured, Medicaid-eligible, American Indian, or Alaska Natives can get vaccinated for free through the CDC's [Vaccines for Children Program](#).