Five reasons to vaccinate your child

Vaccinations are one of the greatest success stories in public health.[1] Here are the top reasons why keeping your child up to date on their vaccines is the most important thing you can do to protect their health.

1. **Vaccinations can save your child's life.**

   Vaccines are safe, affordable, and effective.[2,3,4] They are the best way to protect your child against harmful diseases. The vaccine schedule gives your child the best protection at the right time.[5] Vaccines are recommended before your child is most at risk for a disease, and when their immune system will work best with the vaccine.[6,7]

2. **Vaccines are safe.**

   Vaccines are rigorously tested for safety in clinical trials. A team of experts at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) review the data from the clinical trials to determine whether the vaccine is safe and effective.[8] This team includes doctors, chemists, microbiologists, clinical study site inspectors, manufacturing and facility inspectors, and many others.[8] Vaccines are continuously monitored after they are approved for as long as they are on the market.

3. **Vaccines help keep your child in daycare or school.**

   It's important to keep your child up to date on all childhood vaccines, not only those required for school. Delaying recommended vaccines leaves your child vulnerable to harmful diseases that can take them out of daycare or school.

4. **Sticking with the vaccine schedule can help your family avoid missing work.**

   The time you spend taking your child to vaccine appointments is much less than the time you would spend away from work if your child were to get sick. Most health insurance plans also cover the cost of childhood vaccines.[4,9] Even if you do not have insurance, there are ways to get childhood vaccines for free or at a lower cost. The Vaccines for Children program can help.

5. **Keeping up to date with vaccines helps keep vaccine-preventable diseases in the past.**

   Diseases that once killed or disabled many people in the United States are less common today. Some diseases no longer exist in our country because of vaccines. For example, your child no longer needs to get the smallpox vaccine because vaccines wiped out that disease worldwide.[10,11] Keeping your child up to date on childhood vaccines brings us closer to leaving other harmful diseases in the past.

Talk to your child's doctor or nurse about keeping your child up to date on childhood vaccines. If they're not up to date, make an appointment to get them caught up as soon as possible.

Share this resource. Let your friends and family know your reasons for keeping your child up to date on their vaccines.

[1]Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): https://www.cdc.gov/vaccine-safety-systems/about/monitoring.html
[2]U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA): https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/vaccines-protect-children-harmful-infectious-diseases
[3]U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS): https://www.hhs.gov/immunization/basics/work/index.html
[4]HHS: https://www.hhs.gov/immunization/get-vaccinated/pay/index.html
[5]CDC: https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines-children/schedules/reasons-to-follow.html
[6]HHS: https://www.hhs.gov/immunization/who-and-when/infants-to-teens/index.html
[7]American Academy of Pediatrics: https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/immunizations/Pages/Recommended-Immunization-Schedules.aspx
[8]FDA: https://www.fda.gov/vaccines-blood-biologics/development-approval-process-cber/vaccine-development-101
[9]Vaccinate Your Family: https://vaccinateyourfamily.org/questions-about-vaccines/paying-for-vaccines/
[10]CDC: https://www.cdc.gov/smallpox/index.html
[11]World Health Organization: https://www.who.int/health-topics/smallpox#tab=tab_1

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