

Vaccines keep kids

safe and ready to learn

Why do kids need vaccines for school?

Vaccines protect kids from **dangerous diseases** that spread easily in schools, like measles or whooping cough. They don't just protect your child—they help keep classmates, teachers, families, and communities safe, too.

Vaccines:

- **Lower** your child's risk of getting sick.
- **Help** prevent serious illness and health problems.
- **Protect** friends, siblings, cousins, classmates, and neighbors.

When kids are protected, they can stay in class—not home sick or in the hospital.

Who's at risk?

All unvaccinated people are vulnerable to diseases like measles and chickenpox. Babies, toddlers, and young kids are at especially high risk of contagious diseases. Their immune systems need extra protection to keep them healthy.

Are vaccines safe?

Yes. Vaccines go through years of testing before they're approved. Even after approval, they're monitored closely to make sure they are safe and work well.

What vaccines do most schools require?

- ☐ **DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis):** Diphtheria infects the throat, causing difficulty breathing. Tetanus attacks the nerves, causing painful muscle spasms. Pertussis (whooping cough) can cause severe coughing and difficulty breathing.
- ☐ **MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella):** Measles is an extremely contagious rash that can weaken the immune system. Mumps attacks the salivary (spit) glands, causing painful swelling and, in severe cases, hearing loss. Rubella can cause a rash, swollen lymph nodes, and joint pain.
- ☐ **Polio:** Polio is a viral infection that can cause muscle weakness and permanent paralysis.
- ☐ **Chickenpox (varicella):** Chickenpox is a highly contagious rash caused by a virus that remains dormant in the body and may cause shingles later in life.

Most states also require vaccines against hepatitis B, a liver infection that causes lifelong risk of chronic liver disease and cancer.

Who should get vaccinated?

The American Academy of Pediatrics **recommends every child** get vaccinated against certain diseases at specific ages. Schools require them to help stop the spread of disease and keep students safe.

Good news: Most insurance covers childhood vaccines. Check with your **local health department** about how children can get free vaccines for eligible families.

