

COMMON QUESTIONS PARENTS ASK about infant immunizations



Is it okay for my baby to have so many shots at once?

Yes. Studies show that kids' bodies—even infants—can handle many shots at once. **Having several vaccines at once is safe, even for a newborn.**

Combination vaccines protect your child against more than one disease with a single shot. This reduces the number of shots and office visits your child would need.

It's not your imagination; there are a greater number of shots now than even a few years ago. That's because as science advances, we are able to protect your child against more diseases than ever before.

Don't infants have natural immunity?

Babies get some temporary immunity (protection) from mom during the last few weeks of pregnancy—but only for the diseases mom is immune to.

These antibodies do not last long, leaving the infant vulnerable to disease.

Haven't we gotten rid of most of these diseases in this country?

Thanks to vaccines, most diseases prevented by vaccines are no longer common in this country. Even the few cases we have in the U.S. could very quickly become **tens or hundreds of thousands of cases if we stopped vaccinating.**

It's not uncommon to have measles outbreaks, whooping cough outbreaks, chickenpox outbreaks, and other diseases when vaccination rates drop. Kids that are not fully vaccinated can become seriously sick and spread it through a community.

I heard that some vaccines can cause autism. Is this true?

No. Scientific studies and reviews have found no relationship between vaccines and autism.

Groups of experts, including the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Institute of Medicine (IOM), also agree that vaccines are not responsible for the number of children now recognized to have autism.

Can't I just wait until my child goes to school to catch up on immunizations?

Many of the diseases vaccines protect against can be very dangerous to infants. Newborns, babies, and toddlers can all be exposed to diseases from parents and other adults, brothers and sisters, on a plane, at child care, or even at the grocery store. International travel is easier than ever—your baby can be exposed to diseases from other countries without you knowing.

Don't wait to protect your baby and risk these diseases when he or she needs protection now.

It is easier to stay up to date than to catch up!

Why does my child need a chickenpox shot? Isn't it a mild disease?

Chickenpox can actually be a serious disease for kids if the blisters become infected. Before vaccine was available, about 50 kids died every year from chickenpox, and about 1 in 500 kids who got chickenpox were hospitalized.

My child is sick right now. Is it okay for her to still get shots?

Yes, usually. **Talk with the doctor, but children can usually get vaccinated even if they have a mild illness** like a cold, earache, mild fever, or diarrhea. If the doctor says it is okay, your child can still get vaccinated.

Where can I get more information?

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) • www.cdc.gov/vaccines or 800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)

American Academy of Pediatrics • www.aap.org

The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia • www.vaccine.chop.edu

Immunization Action Coalition (IAC) • www.immunize.org

Every Child By Two • www.ecbt.org