



CONGRATULATIONS! YOU'RE EXPECTING A NEW BABY!

Getting ready to bring a new baby home means making your home safer and baby-friendly. You've probably been buying car seats, finding the safest cribs, and making your lifestyle healthier. Now is also the time to learn about keeping your baby and your family free from vaccine-preventable diseases.

ARE VACCINES NECESSARY?

You may have no personal experience with the diseases today's childhood vaccines prevent. It might even seem as though these diseases are gone and that we no longer need the vaccines. The fact is these diseases still exist, and vaccines are still necessary to keep our children-- and our communities-- protected. Although measles is rare in the United States, the U. S. had 17 measles outbreaks, with 222 people sickened, nearly a third of them needing to be hospitalized.

When people refuse vaccines, they put themselves at risk of contracting devastating diseases and spreading them to other vulnerable people in their community, including children and the elderly. Recent outbreaks of *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib), a dangerous infection that can cause meningitis and death in infants, have been linked to vaccine refusal, as have other outbreaks of vaccine-preventable disease, such as measles and pertussis.

Still, some parents still feel that these diseases are relatively rare and that refusing vaccines is not a risky choice. Our unvaccinated children are at great risk, though, because the diseases vaccines prevent have few effective treatments, even in this day of great medical advances. Children who are unvaccinated are not protected against the suffering, complications, and long-term disability that can come from vaccine-preventable diseases, including encephalitis, cancer, and death.

ARE VACCINES SAFE?

Vaccines are some of the safest products you will give your baby. They are tested over the course of many years; they undergo large, extensive trials; and they are continually monitored for safety for as long as they are used. In the United States, vaccines must meet stringent FDA standards in order to be licensed and are reviewed thoroughly by members of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices before being added to the immunization schedule.

The Institute of Medicine, the health arm of the National Academies of Science, issued reports in 2011 and 2013 reviewing thousands of research articles and found that childhood vaccines and the childhood vaccination schedule are safe and do not cause long-lasting side effects or chronic conditions. The vast majority of babies experience no side effects or only mild side effects, such as soreness or fever. For detailed information on the benefits and possible side effects of vaccinations, visit our website at www.VoicesForVaccines.org/Vaccines.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO TO PROTECT MY BABY?

You can begin protecting your baby from vaccine-preventable diseases before he or she is even born. Be sure that you, your family, and anyone else coming into contact with your baby are up-to-date with their vaccinations. Many adults may be unaware that they need a pertussis booster (Tdap) and a yearly flu shot. Keeping those who surround your family disease-free creates a cocoon of protection for your baby during those crucial months before he or she is old enough to be vaccinated.

Pregnant women also need vaccines! Pregnant women should receive a pertussis vaccine (Tdap) between 27 and 36 weeks of pregnancy, during every pregnancy. This booster will keep mom healthy and will also help provide some immunity to her newborn baby, who will be particularly vulnerable to pertussis, a devastating disease on the rise nationwide. Pregnant women should also receive influenza vaccines during their pregnancy as soon as it is available to them. Flu vaccines are safe for both pregnant women and the babies they carry at any time during the pregnancy.

Once your baby is born, be sure to follow the immunization schedule recommended by the CDC and supported by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Academy of Family Physicians.

WHICH VACCINES DOES MY BABY NEED?

Hepatitis B Vaccine

Your baby will receive this vaccine, which protects him or her from cancer, before leaving the hospital. The hepatitis B virus can be spread through contact with blood, saliva, body tissues, or the fluids of an infected person. Many people who contract hepatitis B never discover the source of their infection. Infants are at special risk because if they become infected at birth, 90% of them will develop a life-long hepatitis B infection and 25% of those will develop liver cancer or liver failure later in life. Hepatitis B infections can also occur through household contact, usually with relatives. Three thousand people die annually from complications of hepatitis B. Reactions to the vaccine, if any, tend to be mild, such as soreness at the injection site or slight fever.

Rotavirus Vaccine

The Rotavirus vaccine is given at 2, 4, and 6 months. Rotaviral gastroenteritis is an illness marked by vomiting, diarrhea, and fever. Once ill, infants can quickly become dehydrated. Rotavirus is spread from person to person, regardless of the hygienic condition of the environment. Before the vaccine was added to the childhood immunization schedule, up to 70,000 children were hospitalized annually in the U.S. due to rotavirus. This vaccine, which is given by mouth, is notable for its extremely low incidence of side effects which, if they occur, are very mild, and can include fever and diarrhea.

DTaP (Diphtheria, tetanus, and acellular pertussis) vaccine

The DTaP vaccine is given at 2, 4, 6, and 12-18 months. It protects children from diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis. All three diseases were significant causes of death before these vaccines were introduced. Pertussis, a particularly dangerous disease in babies, used to cause 8,000 deaths a year in the U.S., primarily in infants. While diphtheria and tetanus cases have been kept at bay through vaccination, pertussis outbreaks still occur in the U.S. and are on the rise. Side effects of the vaccine may include fever, fussiness, and soreness at the injection site.

Hib (Haemophilus influenzae type b) vaccine

Hib vaccine is given at 2, 4, 6, and 12-15 months. *Haemophilus influenzae* type b is a bacterial infection often spread through coughing or from contact with an infected person's saliva. It can lead to severe infections of the brain, throat, and blood. Hib infection of the brain (meningitis) is an extremely serious illness that is fatal in 5% of patients and causes brain damage in 10% to 30% of survivors. Hib vaccine can cause soreness at the injection site, but is not associated with serious side effects.

PCV (Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine)

The pneumococcal vaccine is given at 2, 4, 6, and 12-15 months. An infection caused by *Streptococcus pneumoniae* bacteria can lead to ear infections, pneumonia, blood infections, meningitis, and death. Prior to the use of this vaccine, pneumococcal disease was a serious problem in children under five years of age. Each year, it caused 5 million ear infections, 13,000 blood infections, 700 cases of meningitis, and 200 deaths in the U.S. Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine can cause soreness at the injection site and low-grade fever, but is not associated with serious side effects.

IPV (Inactivated poliovirus vaccine)

The polio vaccine is given at 2, 4, and 6-18 months. Polio virus can spread to the nervous system and cause temporary or permanent paralysis. While polio was eliminated from the U.S. in 1979, it is still endemic in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Nigeria, and is only a plane ride away. The world is trying to eradicate polio for good, and vaccinating your child is a crucial way to help attain this goal. Polio vaccine may cause soreness at the injection site, but is not associated with serious side effects.

WHERE CAN I GO FOR MORE INFORMATION?

The parents at Voices for Vaccines know how overwhelming the information about vaccines can seem because we've been there ourselves. Websites, online forums, Facebook--everyone seems to be telling you something different, and everyone has strong opinions. Be vigilant about what information you use to make decisions about vaccines, and be aware that some of the information you find in your research may come from dubious or poorly vetted sources. Those organizations and websites that claim vaccines are dangerous or that vaccine-preventable disease is not a risk to your child are offering you false information. This misinformation contradicts conclusive research confirming the safety of vaccines, as well as the opinion of thousands of scientists and health care providers.

If you find any information that raises fears or doubts about vaccinating, bring those fears or doubts to your doctor or nurse practitioner. Together, you can review the information for truthfulness or accuracy.

There are plenty of places parents can go to find accurate, easy-to-understand information about vaccines. One of those resources is Voices for Vaccines, a parent-driven non-profit dedicated to providing accurate information about vaccines and their importance. We work hard to ensure our site is accurate and can stand up to scientific scrutiny, and submit all information to our Scientific Advisory Board before publishing.

Below are other sources and books we find particularly valuable, accurate, and accessible to a general reader.

Websites:

- Immunization Action Coalition: www.vaccineinformation.org
- Immunize for Good: www.immunizeforgood.com
- Vaccine Education Center:
www.chop.edu/service/vaccine-education-center/home.html
- National Network for Immunization Information: www.immunizationinfo.org
- Vaccinate Your Baby: www.vaccinateyourbaby.org
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov/vaccines
- American Academy of Pediatrics: www2.aap.org/immunization
- The History of Vaccines: www.historyofvaccines.org

Books:

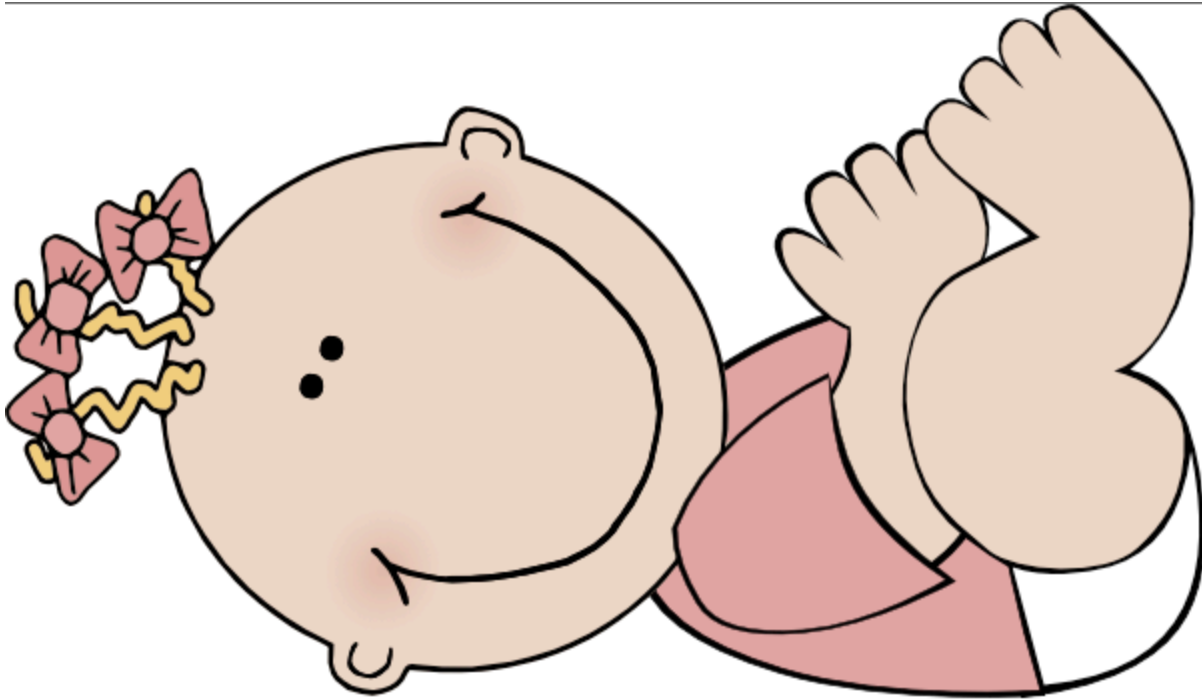
- Deadly Choices: How the Anti-Vaccine Movement Threatens Us All, by Dr. Paul Offit
- Your Baby's Best Shot: Why Vaccines Are Safe and Save Lives, by Stacy Mintzer Herlihy and E. Allison Hagood
- Baby 411: Clear Answers & Smart Advice For Your Baby's First Year, by Denise Fields and Dr. Ari Brown
- What to Expect Guide to Immunizations, by Heidi Murkoff and Sharon Mazel
- Do Vaccines Cause That?! A Guide for Evaluating Vaccine Safety Concerns, by Dr. Martin G. Myers and Diego Pineda
- The Panic Virus: A True Story of Medicine, Science, and Fear, by Seth Mnookin
- Autism's False Prophets: Bad Science, Risky Medicine, and the Search for a Cure, by Dr. Paul Offit
- Your Baby's First Year, by The American Academy of Pediatrics
- Taking Care of Your Child: A Parent's Guide to Complete Medical Care, by Robert Pantell, James Fries, Dr. Donald Vickery, Dr. James F. Fries, Dr. Donald M. Vickery, Dr. Robert H. Pantell

© Karen Ernst and Voices for Vaccines, 2013. Excerpts and links may be used by websites and blogs, provided that full and clear credit is given to Voices for Vaccines, with appropriate and specific direction to the original content. Parents, providers, and others may download and duplicate this toolkit, without alteration, for non-commercial use only.



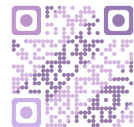
Place business label here.

Hang on hospital door or front door



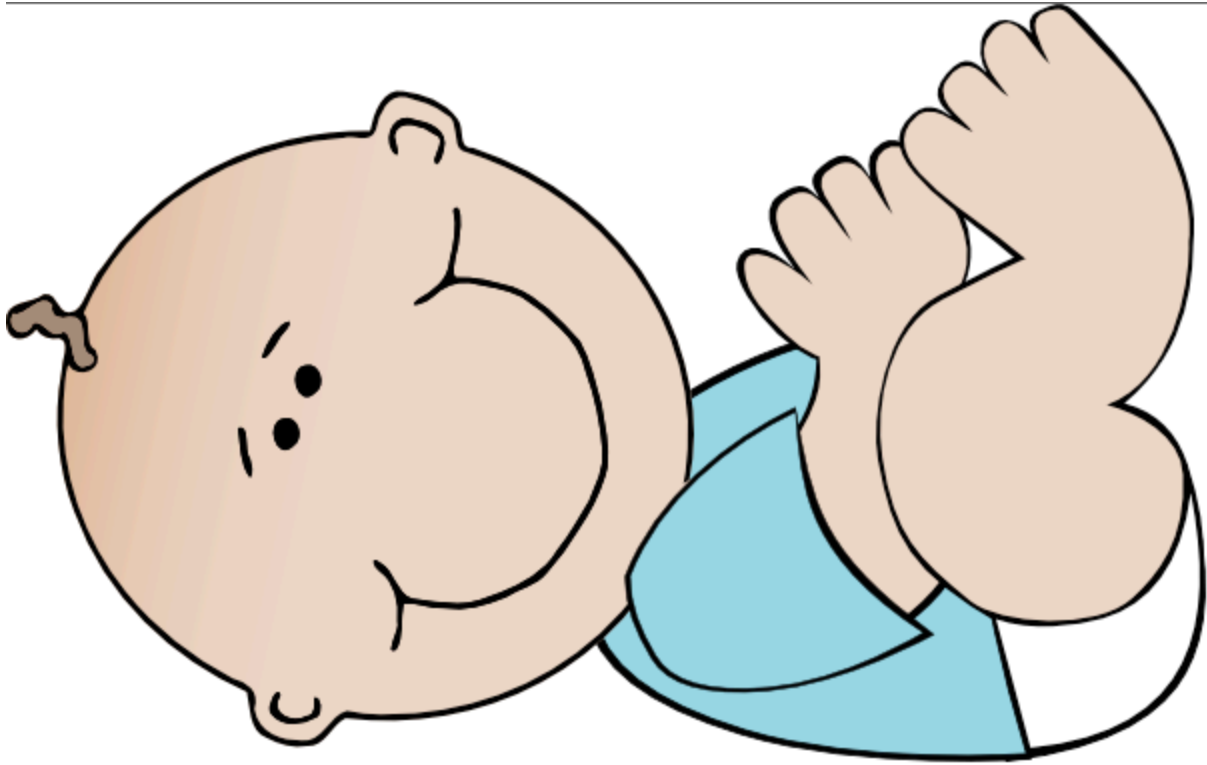
Thank you for welcoming our new baby!

To help us protect the newest member of our family, we request all visitors be up-to-date on their immunizations, including Tdap and flu vaccines.



Courtesy of Voices for Vaccines.

Hang on hospital door or front door



Thank you for welcoming our new baby!

To help us protect the newest member of our family, we request all visitors be up-to-date on their immunizations, including Tdap and flu vaccines.



Courtesy of Voices for Vaccines.