



## Raising Vaccination Rates During a Pandemic

As many states continue stay-at-home orders, people are understandably concerned about going to their healthcare providers' offices for vaccinations for themselves and their children (known as well child visits). It may seem counterintuitive to take a child to a medical facility during COVID outbreaks, but, in fact, it is crucial for children (particularly children 2 years of age and younger), to continue to receive vaccines according to the schedule recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP). Without these vaccines, we risk following this pandemic with increased cases of deadly vaccine-preventable diseases.

The CDC, AAP and AAFP, recommend that providers who care for children should vaccinate all of their patients, if possible. If not, they should prioritize in-person newborn care as well as well visits and immunizations for children through 24 months of age. Providers who care for adults should still vaccinate patients who have a compelling need for vaccinations and if the benefits of getting those vaccinations outweighs the risk of exposure to the coronavirus. Many providers' offices are taking special precautions to limit exposure to COVID-19 and other infectious diseases.

Below, we have outlined some ideas for vaccine advocates that may help encourage people to reach out to their healthcare providers and ask about receiving their routine vaccinations.

- 1. Share talking points with your governor's office and your state's Secretary of Health.** Your governor and/or Secretary of Health is likely giving daily updates on the coronavirus in your state. While they are focused on the immediate crisis, they can also alert the public that routine vaccinations, especially for children, are still very important and that they should call their healthcare provider before canceling appointments. They can also remind people to set a reminder on their calendars to reschedule any cancelled vaccination appointments.
- 2. Work with local medical professional societies to help spread the word.** Local chapters of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Academy of Family Physicians are laser-focused on this issue. Reach out to the leaders of these organizations to determine how you can assist in their efforts.
- 3. Submit opinion pieces and letters to the editor to your local papers.** People are more tuned into their local media than ever before. Consider drafting a short letter or a longer opinion piece on why it's important for parents to keep up with their children's vaccines. They're easier to write than you think! Check out [Voices for Vaccines' guide to writing opinion-editorials](#).
- 4. Consider how your community receives information.** Do they rely on communications from their churches, temples, synagogues or mosques? Are schools and preschools sharing information via email or Facebook posts? Learn more about the channels parents are turning to and reach out to those individuals and organizations to spread the word.

[Vaccinate Your Family](#) is a national, nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting people of all ages from vaccine-preventable diseases. We have compiled [recommendations for routine vaccination](#) on our website for your convenience, as well as talking points you can use in your own communications.