

# Health Bulletin

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

#93 in a series of Health Bulletins on issues of pressing interest to all New Yorkers

**Start Smart:**

**Vaccinate**

**Protect your kids from serious diseases.  
Get your child immunized.**



## The Benefits of Vaccinating Your Child

**Vaccines help protect your child from many dangerous diseases.**

- Immunizations (vaccines or shots) help protect your child from many serious diseases, including measles, mumps, whooping cough (pertussis) and chickenpox. Children who are not vaccinated can get very sick or even die from these diseases.
- Children should get the recommended immunizations at the right age and on time. New York State requires that children be immunized if they attend a child care facility or school.
- Talk with your child's health care provider to find out which vaccines your child needs and when. To find a provider near you, call **311**.

**Vaccines help protect others.**

- Getting your child fully vaccinated helps protect everyone, especially newborns and infants too young to be fully vaccinated.

## Childhood Vaccinations: Safe for Your Kids

**Vaccines are very safe. The benefits far outweigh any risks.**

- Before a vaccine is approved for use, it goes through years of testing. Each vaccine is then monitored on an ongoing basis for safety and to see how well it works.
- The benefits of vaccinating are much greater than any risks. Before vaccines, many more people got sick or died from these diseases than do now.
  - Before the measles vaccine, more than 3 million people got sick with measles each year in the United States. Of those, 48,000 were hospitalized and about 450 died.
- Serious side effects from vaccines are rare. Any side effects are usually mild, such as soreness where the shot was given.

## Immunization Tips for Parents

- Bring your child's immunization card to every doctor visit. This will help you stay on schedule for your child's recommended vaccinations.
- If you don't know which shots your child has had, call **311** and ask for the Citywide Immunization Registry (CIR). The CIR keeps a record of vaccines your child receives. All children born or vaccinated in New York City are enrolled in the CIR.
- For free or low-cost vaccinations, call **311** or visit [nyc.gov](https://nyc.gov) and search for **childhood immunizations**.



## Childhood Immunizations

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### 1 I've heard a lot of negative things about vaccines. How do I know what to believe?

- Organizations like the Vaccine Education Center at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia ([vaccines.chop.edu](https://vaccines.chop.edu)) and Parents of Kids with Infectious Diseases ([pkids.org](https://pkids.org)) offer reliable information.
- Be skeptical of claims against vaccines. False or misleading information can travel fast on the Internet, especially in chat rooms.
- Talk to your child's doctor about any information that concerns you.

#### 2 I've heard that some vaccines can cause autism. Is this true?

- No. Vaccines *do not* cause autism. Numerous scientific studies from the U.S. and around the world have found no link between autism and vaccines.
- For more information about autism, visit [autismspeaks.org](https://autismspeaks.org) or [autismsciencefoundation.org](https://autismsciencefoundation.org).







### **3 Why should I get my child immunized? I thought no one gets these diseases anymore.**

- Many childhood diseases are no longer common because of vaccines. But the germs that cause most of these diseases are still around. Between 2008 and 2011, about 700 New Yorkers each year got sick from vaccine-preventable diseases.
- When vaccination rates are low, these diseases can come back and spread quickly.
  - In Europe, a measles outbreak spread through 30 countries in 2011, with more than 26,000 people infected. The outbreak was mainly due to low immunization rates.
  - In 2011, almost 225 people contracted measles in the U.S., with 25 in New York City alone, mostly children and adults who had not been vaccinated.

### **4 Is it okay for my child to have so many vaccines at once?**

- Yes. Children are exposed to thousands of germs every day. The killed or weakened germs in vaccines are very few compared to the millions of germs children fight off each day.
- Talk to your child's doctor about combination vaccines, which protect against more than one disease with a single shot. They can reduce the number of shots and office visits your child will need.

### **5 I've heard it's safer to skip some vaccines or wait to get my child vaccinated. Is this true?**

- No. If you skip some vaccines or wait to get your child vaccinated, you put your child at risk. Your child could get very sick or even die from a serious disease that could have been prevented.
- Children should get the recommended vaccinations at the right age and on time.



## More Information

- New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene: visit [nyc.gov](https://nyc.gov) and search for **childhood immunizations**, or call **311**
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [cdc.gov/vaccines](https://cdc.gov/vaccines) or **800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636)**
- American Academy of Pediatrics: [aap.org](https://aap.org)
- Vaccine Education Center at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia: [vaccines.chop.edu](https://vaccines.chop.edu)
- Parents of Kids with Infectious Diseases: [pkids.org](https://pkids.org)
- Immunization Action Coalition: [immunize.org](https://immunize.org)
- Every Child By Two: [ecbt.org](https://ecbt.org)

**DIAL  
311**

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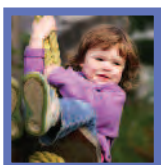
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For Non-Emergency New York City Services  
Telephone Interpretation in More Than 170 Languages