

Vaccination Mythbusters

Get the facts about vaccines. Keeping your child's shots up to date is the best protection against many serious diseases.

Myth: No one gets polio anymore. My child does not need to be vaccinated.

Fact: Vaccines prevent dangerous diseases like polio. Vaccination has saved millions of lives over the years. However, the viruses and bacteria that cause vaccine-preventable diseases still exist and can be passed on to people who are not protected by vaccines. Vaccines are your child's best protection against many serious diseases.

Myth: Getting one shot in a series is enough protection.

Fact: Skipping shots can leave your child unprotected. The good news is that if your child has missed a dose, he can continue where he left off.

Myth: If everyone else is vaccinated, there is no need for my child to get vaccinated.

Fact: Every child needs to be vaccinated. Vaccines keep diseases like polio from coming back. If children stop getting their shots, it could make many people get sick and even die. Talk to your doctor to see if it is appropriate for your child to be vaccinated.

Myth: Sick children should not be vaccinated.

Fact: Often children can get vaccinated even if they have a mild illness or low-grade fever. It is important to keep their shots up to date. Talk with your doctor if you have any questions or concerns.

Myth: Childhood vaccination lasts forever.

Fact: Protection from some early childhood shots can wear off. That is why a booster shot for tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (whooping cough) is recommended for 11-12 year olds.

Myth: Children catch diseases only from other kids.

Fact: Infectious diseases pass from person to person no matter the age. For example, measles, mumps, whooping cough, and chickenpox are all spread by coughing or sneezing. Vaccination is your child's best protection against these diseases.

Myth: It is safer to let my child get a disease like chickenpox than the vaccination.

Fact: Before the vaccine, chickenpox put 11,000 people in the hospital each year. Chickenpox can cause serious problems, like skin infections, scars, pneumonia, or brain damage. Getting the chickenpox shot is generally safer than getting chickenpox disease.

Myth: Vaccines are not important.

Fact: Vaccines keep you healthy. Also, proof of shots may be required for children to attend school, play sports, and go to summer camp. Check with your doctor to learn which shots your child needs.

Don't wait. Vaccinate!