

BACK TO SCHOOL:

# Immunize your child



As summer comes to a close, it's time to think about going back to school. One of the most important things you can do for your child's health is to make sure he or she is up-to-date on vaccines, which can protect against many dangerous diseases.

## Vaccine requirements

Many states require that kids have certain vaccines (shots or immunizations) before they can come to school. The best way to ensure your child is fully protected is to talk to your child's doctor. You can also find information about vaccines on the Centers for Disease Control website at [www.cdc.gov/vaccines](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines).

Some diseases, such as mumps and polio, have become very rare thanks to vaccines. But outbreaks of some diseases are still happening, and immunization is the best way to protect your child from a serious illness. For instance, 2014 had a record number of measles cases and many outbreaks of whooping cough have been occurring in schools across the U.S.

## Start vaccines on time

Babies, toddlers and preschoolers get a number of vaccines early in life to help protect them from 14 life-threatening illnesses. This includes measles, mumps, whooping cough and more, which used to be common — and very dangerous — for young children.

But vaccines aren't just for little ones. As children get older, they may need "boosters" to help protect them as the first vaccine begins to wear off. And, certain vaccines like the flu shot need to be given every year for protection.

## Vaccines protect everyone

When disease outbreaks happen, a vaccinated person is much less likely to get sick. If they do get it, they usually get a much milder case.

Getting all vaccines on time means you are protecting your own child and others around them. This is known as "herd immunity." When 90 to 95 percent of people in a community are vaccinated, it's almost impossible for these dangerous diseases to spread. But when vaccine rates go below 90 percent, diseases can take hold and spread. This weakens the immunity of an entire community.

If you're not sure if your child needs vaccines, call your child's doctor today and beat the back-to-school rush. Catch-up vaccines can be given, if needed, even if your child missed some shots before.

## Concerned about vaccines?

The U.S. supply of vaccines is extremely safe and effective.

When reading something about vaccines, be sure the information comes from a credible source with data to prove the statements.

Many false claims have been made about vaccines. Some of these false claims can be found on the Internet even after they've been proven wrong. If you have questions, ask your child's doctor or visit <https://ivaccinate.org> to get answers to many common concerns.