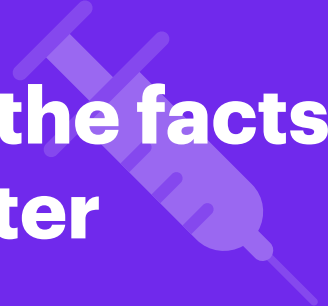




# Arm yourself with the facts: Why vaccines matter



Vaccines are a safe and effective way of keeping yourself and your family healthy. They help build immunity, offer protection against serious diseases, and help prevent the spread of disease. The reality is that it's always better to prevent a disease than to treat it after it occurs, which is why vaccines are so important.

## Five facts to know about vaccines:

**1** Vaccines are needed throughout different stages in your life, especially before and during pregnancy.

If you're planning to get pregnant, being up to date on all of your vaccinations is important. If you're not sure which vaccinations you've had, talk to your healthcare provider. In most cases, they can do blood tests to find out what vaccines you need.

**2** Staying up to date on your vaccines helps reduce the risk of your baby getting sick and keeps them safe until they can get their own.

Infections like chickenpox and rubella (also called German measles) can harm you and your baby during pregnancy. Talk to your provider to plan a vaccination schedule for you and your baby.

**3** If you didn't vaccinate before or during pregnancy, do it after your baby's born.

If you're breastfeeding, it's safe to get routine vaccines, including COVID-19 vaccines and boosters. Be sure to talk with your provider if you have concerns.

**4** Vaccinations help develop immunity in your baby and provide protection from 14 serious diseases before their second birthday.

Getting more than one shot at a time won't harm your baby. Even as a newborn, your baby's immune system can handle many shots at once. Vaccines are safe and go through careful testing before anyone can get them.

**5** All babies, including those who spend time in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), need vaccinations.

Babies born preterm and/or with low birthweight follow the same recommended vaccination schedule from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). If your baby has a health condition, travels outside the U.S., or comes into contact with someone who's sick with a vaccine-preventable disease, talk with your baby's provider.

## Get the facts at:

[marchofdimes.org/vaccines](https://marchofdimes.org/vaccines)

