



Report to **PARENTS**

Making Vaccinations Less Stressful for Kids

One in five kids are behind on vaccinations due to the COVID-19 pandemic. If your child has missed a routine immunization, they're not alone. Learn about the risks of missing vaccinations, ways to support your child during vaccination appointments and make them less stressful, and how to get them caught up to ensure they'll be able to go to school, play with their friends, and stay healthy overall.

Child Vaccination Rates

Forty percent of parents said their child had missed a vaccination because of the COVID-19 pandemic. There's also been a 71 percent drop in health care visits for 7- to 17-year-olds, ages when critical vaccines are given.

Risks of Missing Vaccinations

It's important not to skip or delay your child's immunizations. Vaccine-preventable diseases can be extremely serious, require hospitalization, or even be deadly—especially in young children. Families can protect kids for a lifetime against diseases like measles, whooping cough, and meningitis, which can spread easily among unvaccinated children and adults.

Get Back on Track

Check with your child's pediatrician to see if they're on target. If not, it's not too late to vaccinate. The CDC has developed recommendations and a timeline to get your children back on schedule. Most childhood vaccines are covered by insurance or free to children who might not be able to afford them. Families not covered by insurance or



who cannot afford a visit to the doctor can obtain free vaccinations through a federal program administered by local entities.

Make Shots Less Stressful

Getting shots isn't fun for any age group, but you can learn simple ways to support your child before, during, and after their immunizations.

- Give your child something sweet to eat, which actually can help reduce their pain response.
- Ask for pain-relieving spray or ointment to block pain signals from the skin.
- Calmly explain that they might feel a little pinch that'll go away very fast. Use words like "pressure" or "poke" rather than "pain" or "shot."
- Bring anything the child finds comforting, like a favorite toy, blanket, or book to help them focus on something pleasant.
- Use distraction. Right before the poke, call your child's name or act silly.
- Remember that bigger kids need support, too. Have them take deep breaths to "blow out" the pain.