



Catholic Healthcare West

Ask the Expert
Arizona Republic

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Q: Why is it important to immunize my baby and is it really necessary?

A: Yes! Immunizations are the best way to protect your baby and the community from diseases. Many serious diseases that caused illness or even death are no longer around because of immunizations such as polio, measles, meningitis, diphtheria and smallpox.

The recommended guidelines for vaccinations include:

- Meningococcal vaccine (MCV4) - Protects against meningococcal disease.
- Hep B - Protects against hepatitis B.
- Inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) - Protects against polio.
- DTaP - Protects against diphtheria, tetanus (lockjaw), and pertussis (whooping cough).
- Hib vaccine - Protects against Haemophilus influenza type b (which causes spinal meningitis).
- MMR - Protects against measles, mumps and rubella (German measles).
- Pneumococcal vaccine (PCV) - Protects against pneumonia, infection in the blood and meningitis.
- Varicella - Protects against chickenpox.
- Rotavirus – Protects against severe diarrhea caused by rotavirus.
- Hep A - Protects against hepatitis A.
- Seasonal Influenza - protects against different flu viruses.

The majority of vaccinations occur within the first few years of a child's life. It's important, however, that adults keep up-to-date with their immunizations as well, including an annual flu shot. Parents and adults that will be caring for an infant should have the Tdap vaccine to prevent pertussis or whooping cough. Infants are not fully protected against pertussis until 12 to 15 months of age.

All vaccines, including the ones listed above, have been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and are safe. Some children may have a minor reaction to an immunization, such as running a low-grade fever or swelling on or near the injection site. If you have questions or concerns about the recommended immunization schedule, be sure to speak with your child's pediatrician.

To learn more about immunizations, log on to the Arizona Partnership for Immunization at www.whyimmunize.org.

Susan Ohton, R.N., is the Manager of Community Wellness Children and Adult Immunization Programs at Chandler Regional Medical Center. For more information, or for a free doctor referral, please call ResourceLink toll-free at 1.877.728.5414.