**Why do kids need shots?**
Most kids get shots, called vaccinations or immunizations, to protect them from serious diseases, such as:

- Chickenpox
- Different types of influenza (flu)
- Diphtheria
- Hepatitis A & B
- Measles
- Mumps
- Pertussis (whooping cough)
- Polio
- Rubella
- Tetanus

Although you might not see or hear much about these diseases, they are still around. Some of these diseases are more common in parts of the world where kids don’t get shots.

If we stop giving shots to kids, many more people will get these diseases.

**Shots aren’t natural. Isn’t there a better way?**
No. Even though breastfeeding protects newborn babies against some germs, that protection lasts for a short time and does not protect against some of the germs that can cause serious disease. Taking vitamins won’t protect your kids against these diseases either.

The only way to naturally be protected from these diseases is to suffer through them. Some parents feel that taking the chance of getting the disease would be better than giving their kids shots.

However, it’s important to know that these diseases can cause permanent injury and even death. Because shots protect your child from these diseases, they are a safer, and better, choice.

**Are these shots safe? I’ve heard they can cause illness.**
The shots are very safe. Some kids have soreness where the shot was given or run a low fever. Both of these side effects are minor and easy to treat.

Serious side effects are rare.

If you’re worried about getting shots for your kids, talk to your doctor.

**Can my kids get shots if they’re sick?**
Yes. Your kids can get shots if they have a mild illness or if they’re taking antibiotics. They cannot get shots if they’re extremely sick or running a high fever.

**If my kids didn’t get shots on time, is it too late?**
It’s never too late! Don’t worry, we can get your kids caught up. Call your doctor’s office to get started.
IMPORTANT NOTE
For parents of babies less than 6 months old

Did you know that babies less than 6 months old are at highest risk for dying from pertussis (whooping cough)?

Because of this risk, everyone who has regular contact with babies under 6 months old, who hasn’t had a tetanus (Td) shot in the last 2 years, should receive a booster shot that contains pertussis (Tdap) to protect babies from getting whooping cough.

For more information

The Kaiser Permanente Resource Line can give you more information about recommended shots and well visits for kids, as well as community resources in your area. Call weekdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. toll-free 1-800-992-2279, or by e-mail at resource.l@ghc.org.

Visit the Health and Wellness Resources section on the Kaiser Permanente website at kp.org/wa for more information on a variety of health topics.

This information is not meant to diagnose health problems or to take the place of your health care team.