

Why do kids need shots?

Most kids get shots, called vaccinations or immunizations, to protect them from serious diseases, such as:

- ♦ Chickenpox
- ♦ COVID-19
- ♦ Diphtheria
- ♦ Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)
- ♦ Hepatitis A & B
- ♦ Influenza (flu)
- ♦ Measles
- ♦ Mumps
- ♦ Pertussis (whooping cough)
- ♦ Pneumococcal
- ♦ Polio
- ♦ Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)
- ♦ Rotavirus
- ♦ 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, disability, cancer, 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. These side effects are minor and easy to treat.

Serious side effects are very rare. If you're worried about getting shots for your kids, please share your concerns with your doctor.

Can my kids get shots if they're sick?

Yes. Your kids can get shots if they have a mild illness or are 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

Stay up to date on recommended vaccines. View the vaccine schedule at [cdc.gov/vaccines](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines).

Visit kp.org for more information on a variety of health topics.

Kids and Shots

What all parents should know

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