



# TOP 10 REASONS TO IMMUNIZE

## WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

- 1. Immunizations can save lives.** Immunizations provide you and your family protection against more vaccine-preventable diseases than ever before. Some vaccine-preventable diseases that once injured or killed thousands have been eliminated and others are close to being eliminated. Polio was once the most-feared disease, causing death and paralysis, but today, thanks to immunizations, there are no reports of polio in the United States.
- 2. Immunizations protect you and your child from serious diseases.** Immunizations help the body fight off diseases, such as Hepatitis B, Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, Polio, Haemophilus Influenzae type b, Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Varicella, Meningococcal, Pneumococcal, Influenza, Hepatitis A, Rotavirus and Human Papillomavirus (HPV). New vaccines are available for adults against common illnesses such as Pertussis and Shingles.
- 3. Immunizations are safe and effective.** Immunizations are only given to children and adults after a long and careful review by scientists, doctors and health care professionals. The most comprehensive scientific studies and reviews have found no link between vaccines and autism. The American Academy of Pediatrics, the Institute of Medicine, the National Institute of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other federal agencies also agree that vaccines are not responsible for the number of children now recognized to have Autism.
- 4. Immunizations are required for school and child care attendance.** For child care enrollment, children must be immunized against Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, Pneumonia, Polio, Hepatitis B, Haemophilus influenzae type B, Measles, Mumps, Rubella and Varicella. Kindergarten through twelfth grade attendance requires the Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, Polio, Hepatitis B, Measles, Mumps, Rubella and Varicella vaccines. The Pertussis vaccine is required for adolescents entering eighth grade.
- 5. Immunizations can save time and money.** A child with a vaccine-preventable disease can be kept out of school or child care for long periods of time. A prolonged illness can take a financial toll because of lost time at work, medical bills, or long-term disability care. In comparison, vaccination against these diseases is a good investment and is usually covered by insurance. Missouri's Vaccines for Children program is federally funded and provides immunizations to children and adolescents, at no cost, who might not otherwise be immunized because of inability to pay.



- 6. It is easy to get immunizations.** If you have a doctor, call for an appointment. You can also contact your local public health agency to schedule an appointment.
- 7. Immunizations protect others you care about.** Serious vaccine-preventable diseases still occur. Unfortunately, some babies are too young to be completely immunized, and some people may not be able to receive immunizations due to allergies, illness, weakened immune systems, or other reasons. To help keep these individuals safe, it is important that you and everyone else in your family be immunized. This not only protects your family, it also helps prevent the spread of these diseases to your friends and loved ones.
- 8. Immunizations protect future generations.** Immunizations have reduced and eliminated many diseases that killed or severely disabled people just a few generations ago. For example, the smallpox vaccination helped eradicate the disease worldwide. Today, children and adults do not have to get a smallpox vaccination routinely because the disease no longer exists.
- 9. Immunizations only hurt for a few seconds yet give your child the best protection from these diseases.** Tell your child the truth - it will be a quick sting but will help them stay healthier for a long time. Immunizations will involve some discomfort and may cause pain, redness or tenderness at the site of injection, but this is minimal compared to the pain, discomfort and trauma of the diseases these vaccines prevent.
- 10. The best reason:** You love your children and want to protect them. Hugs, kisses and story times are gifts of love. Giving your children the gift of protection from disease is another. Take them for all their immunizations.

Immunizations are the best protection against serious diseases. Talk to your health care provider about getting yourself and your family immunized today!

For more information about vaccine-preventable diseases, visit the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services' web site at <http://health.mo.gov/immunizations>.

