



VACCINES AND SOUTH ASIANS

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

- Vaccines (also known as immunizations or “shots”) are medicines given to people to protect them from certain diseases.
- Vaccines are given to children at a young age to provide them with lifetime protection from certain diseases and illnesses and build strong immune systems.¹
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), has developed a schedule that pediatricians use to guide vaccinations through childhood. Some vaccines require one or more follow-up visits at certain ages. For a complete schedule of recommended child vaccines, visit:
www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/schedules/child-schedule.htm.
- Examples of recommended vaccines for children and adults include those that protect against: Diphtheria, Haemophilus influenza type B (HIB); Hepatitis A, B and C; Human Papilloma Virus (HPV); Influenza (flu); Measles; Meningococcal diseases; Mumps; Pertussis (whooping cough); Pneumococcal disease; Polio; Rotovirus; Rubella (German Measles); Tetanus; and Varicella (chickenpox).²
- In addition, children (6 months and older) and adults should get vaccinated against the seasonal flu each year. Each year the flu vaccine protects against a variety of common flu viruses that can cause illness.
- Vaccination of children, adults 65 years and older, pregnant women, and people with serious or chronic medical conditions is especially important.

- If a person does not stay updated on vaccinations for themselves or their families, they become at risk for serious illness from diseases that are commonly prevented by these vaccines.
- In the U.S., children must be up-to-date on many required vaccinations to enter school or day care.

VACCINE SAFETY & SIDE EFFECTS

- Vaccines are safe. In the U.S., vaccines are licensed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which requires extensive testing to ensure safety.³
- The risk of serious problems from vaccines is very small. Some vaccines can have mild side effects that resolve very quickly. These may include symptoms such as fever, fatigue, and/or soreness or swelling under the skin where the vaccine may have been given.
- Your child’s pediatrician can explain possible side effects from different vaccines.
- When considering getting a vaccination, it is important to remember that vaccine side effects are usually brief whereas the benefits of vaccines can last for a much longer period of time.



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Know which vaccines are recommended and make sure to get those vaccines for you and your family. Refer to immunization schedules for you or your child's age group.
- If you are worried about paying for vaccines for your children, you can receive inexpensive or free vaccines through many local public health clinics and/or community centers.
- Visit with your (and your child's) health care provider on a regular basis to discuss vaccinations.
- Pay attention to public health and prevention messages to make sure you are aware of changes in vaccinations that may be necessary.
- **Get your flu shot**- children and adults should get the annual flu shot. These shots can be received through your doctor's office, your local health department, or a variety of other clinics and pharmacies in your community.

RESOURCES

National

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
Vaccines and Immunizations

Phone: (800) 232-4636

Website: www.cdc.gov/vaccines/default.htm

AUTHORS

Amishi G. Sabnis, MPH

Kalpana Bhandarkar, MPH, MBA

EDITORS

SAPHA 2011 Board of Directors



¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Vaccine Safety. Available at: www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/Vaccines/Common_questions.html. Accessed 22 August 2010.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

Fact Sheet Last Updated: October 2011

While every effort has been made to verify information provided, the authors and SAPHA are not liable for errors or omissions. Readers are advised to consult a health care provider before diagnosing, managing, or treating any health problem. Readers should not use this information in place of the judgment of a treating health care provider.

For further information about SAPHA or to access other SAPHA Fact Sheets, please go to www.SAPHA.org.

