

Communication Toolkit: School-Age Children



Updated 6/24/16

Getting vaccinated according to the recommended immunization schedule is one of the most important things a parent can do to protect their child's health. Diseases can quickly spread among groups of children who aren't vaccinated. Whether it's a baby starting at a new child care facility, a toddler heading to preschool, a student going back to elementary, middle or high school – or even a college freshman – parents should check their child's vaccination records.

Child care facilities, preschool programs, schools and colleges are prone to outbreaks of infectious diseases. Children in these settings can easily spread illnesses to one another due to poor hand washing, not covering their coughs, and other factors such as interacting in crowded environments.

When children are not vaccinated, they are at increased risk for disease and can spread disease to others in their play groups, child care centers, classrooms and communities – including babies who are too young to be fully vaccinated and people with weakened immune systems due to cancer and other health conditions.

Additionally, states may require children who are entering child care or school to be vaccinated against certain diseases. Colleges and universities may have their own requirements, especially for students living in a dormitory. Parents should check with their child's doctor, school or the local health department to learn about the requirements in their state or county.

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Sample Key Messages

Use key messages as the basis for talking points, presentations, media interviews, news releases, social media messages or other outreach materials. Localize and tailor your messages with information or stories from your own organization or community.

Vaccinating according to the recommended immunization schedule provides your child with the best protection against preventable diseases.

- Between the time your child is born and when they go off to college, they'll get vaccines to protect against a number of serious diseases.
- Some children at your child care center may be too young to get certain vaccines, and are therefore vulnerable to diseases.
 - By vaccinating your child according to the recommended schedule, you'll be protecting their classmates as well.
- You will also be helping to protect people in your community who cannot receive vaccines for medical reasons (e.g., people with weakened immune systems, such as some people with cancer and people who have received transplants).

Vaccines are recommended for children of all ages.

- The need for vaccination does not end in childhood. Vaccines are recommended throughout our lives based on age, lifestyle, occupation, travel locations, medical conditions, and previous vaccination history.
- Preteens and teens are at risk for diseases like meningococcal disease and cancer-causing HPV infections and need the protection of vaccines to keep them healthy.
- Young adults need vaccines to stay protected against serious diseases, especially when they are college bound.
 - Protection from vaccines received during childhood can wear off with time, and college students may also be at increased risk for other vaccine-preventable diseases like meningococcal disease.
 - Infectious diseases tend to spread wherever large groups of people gather together. Outbreaks of serogroup B meningococcal disease have been reported from college campuses during the last several years. [Learn more about vaccine recommendations for those at increased risk in community settings.](#)
- You can send your kids off to college protected from serious diseases by making sure they've received all the vaccines recommended for them. Far too few adults are receiving the vaccines they need, leaving themselves and their loved ones unnecessarily vulnerable to serious diseases.

Check your child's vaccine records to make sure they are up to date on all the vaccines they need to stay healthy.

- Keep your child's vaccine records current and in a safe place.

- If you haven't already, check your child's immunization record and schedule a visit to their physician or clinic. Doing so now will avoid a potential last minute rush and will help ensure there are no surprises on the first day of school.
- Most schools require children to be up to date on vaccinations before enrolling or starting school in order to protect the health of all students. If you are unsure of your state's school immunization requirements, check with your child's doctor, school, child care provider, college health center, or local health department.
- If you need official copies of immunization records for your child, or if you need to update your personal records, there are several places you can look including your child's doctor, public health clinic, or school; or your state health department.
 - For more information on obtaining vaccination records for your child, visit CDC's [Records & Requirements](#) page.
- Make sure that you provide your child care facility with updated vaccine records each time your child gets a shot.

Many vaccine-preventable diseases can easily spread in child care and school settings. Protecting your children from preventable diseases will help keep them healthy and in school.

- Schools are prone to outbreaks of infectious diseases, and school-age children can further spread disease to their families and others with whom they come in contact.
- When a child comes down with an illness such as whooping cough, chickenpox or the flu, he or she may miss a lot of school while recovering – and somebody will need to stay home to provide care and make trips to the doctor.
 - Children can spread diseases to newborns too young to have received all doses of recommended vaccines, or people with weakened immune systems, such as some people with cancer and transplant recipients who are also at higher risk of disease.
- For example, measles is still common in many parts of the world. The disease is brought into the United States by unvaccinated travelers who are infected while in other countries. When measles gets into communities of unvaccinated and under-vaccinated people in the U.S. (such as people who refuse vaccines for religious, philosophical or personal reasons), outbreaks are more likely to occur.
 - The measles outbreak in 2015 was a perfect example of how quickly infectious diseases can spread when they reach groups of people who aren't vaccinated.
 - Since measles was declared eliminated in the United States in 2000, the annual number of people reported to have measles ranged from a low of 37 people in 2004 to a high of 668 people in 2014. In 2015, there were 189 provisionally reported cases.

Vaccines are very safe.

- Vaccines are thoroughly tested before licensing and carefully monitored after they are licensed to ensure that they are very safe.
- Vaccines are among the safest and most cost-effective ways to prevent disease. They not only protect vaccinated individuals but also help protect entire communities by preventing and reducing the spread of infectious diseases.
- Currently the United States has the safest, most effective vaccine supply in its history. The country's long-standing vaccine safety system ensures that vaccines are as safe as possible.

Talk to your child's doctor or other health care professional to make sure your children get the vaccinations they need when they need them.

- Take advantage of any visit to the doctor – checkups, sick visits, even physicals for sports or college – to ask the doctor about what vaccinations your child needs.
- Families who need help paying for vaccines should ask their health care professional about the Vaccines for Children program, which provides vaccines at no cost to eligible children who do not otherwise have access to immunization.
 - The Vaccines for Children (VFC) program provides vaccines for children ages 18 years and younger, who are uninsured, Medicaid-eligible, American Indian or Alaska Native. Learn more about the [VFC program](#).

Sample News Release

Customize sample news releases with information, stories or events happening in your community. Submit news releases, articles or op-eds to local news and partner organizations to publish, post on websites, or share through social media. Distribute or make available electronically to key partners and decision-makers.

Word Count: ~279

Audience: Media/Parents

Send Your Children Back to School Protected from Serious Diseases

National Immunization Awareness Month is a reminder that we all need vaccines throughout our lives.

Back-to-school season is here. It's time for parents to gather school supplies and back packs. It's also the perfect time to make sure your children are up to date on their vaccines.

To celebrate the importance of immunizations for people of all ages – and make sure children are protected with all the vaccines they need as they go back to school – the *[name of local organization]* is joining with partners nationwide in recognizing August as National Immunization Awareness Month.

[Insert information on any events local organization is hosting or is aware of.]

“Getting children all of the vaccines recommended by CDC’s immunization schedule is one of the most important things parents can do to protect their children from serious diseases,” said *[insert name of local official]*. “If you haven’t done so already, now is the time to check with your child’s doctor to find out what vaccines your child needs.”

Vaccines protect against a number of serious and potentially life-threatening diseases.

When children are not vaccinated, they are at increased risk for diseases and can also spread diseases to others in their classrooms and community – including babies who are too young to be fully vaccinated, and people with weakened immune systems due to cancer or other health conditions.

Talk to your child’s doctor to find out which vaccines are recommended for them before going back to school.

Parents can find out more about the recommended vaccines at www.cdc.gov/vaccines/ or *[insert local organization websites]* or call *[insert local organization phone number]*.

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Sample Facebook Posts

Use these sample Facebook posts as they are—or as a starting point to customize and localize your own posts. These messages are ideally 250 characters or less to allow the entire post to be viewed in the newsfeed.

Parents of Children of All Ages

Your children need vaccines to protect them from several diseases that can be serious, even life-threatening. Find out what vaccines your child needs at every age at:

<http://go.usa.gov/chtsT> #NIAM16

Vaccine-preventable diseases like measles and whooping cough still exist and outbreaks can occur. Learn how you can protect your children from serious diseases at every age: <http://go.usa.gov/chtsT> #NIAM16

Parents of Babies & Young Children

Learn about the vaccines your baby needs from CDC's vaccine website for parents. Find out about diseases vaccines prevent, immunization schedule, possible side effects, how to comfort your baby during vaccine visits, and more: <http://1.usa.gov/lnPEhA> #NIAM16

CDC has a parent-friendly childhood immunization schedule. Quickly see when your child needs each vaccine, so you can stay on schedule and make sure your baby is protected against 14 serious diseases by age two: <http://go.usa.gov/4EBB> #NIAM16

Parents of Preteens & Teens

While your preteens and teens are thinking about all the fun things they did this summer, you are likely thinking about keeping them healthy and safe for the upcoming school year. HPV vaccination is recommended at ages 11-12 to protect against cancer-causing HPV infections. Is HPV vaccination on your back-to-school checklist?

<http://go.usa.gov/chHS9> #NIAM16

Preteens and teens need four vaccines to be protected against serious diseases like the flu and cancers caused by HPV. Make an appointment to make sure your children get all the vaccines they need before they go back to school. #NIAM16

It's back-to-school time again. Are your preteens protected from cancers caused by HPV? <http://go.usa.gov/chHcy> #NIAM16

Has your preteen received the #HPV vaccine? Make an appointment with your child's healthcare professional today to protect your preteen today from HPV cancers tomorrow. <http://go.usa.gov/chHSA> #CancerPrevention #NIAM16

Parents of Young Adults

Send your child off to college with the best protection against serious disease. College-

age young adults need vaccines to prevent serious diseases. Don't wait – make back-to-school appointments for college vaccinations now. <http://go.usa.gov/chtw9> #NIAM16

Young Adults

College prep includes getting all the vaccines you need before the school year starts. Take CDC's quiz to find out which vaccines you might need: <http://go.usa.gov/chtwT> #NIAM16

Off to college or your chosen career? Before you go, make sure you're up to date on all the vaccines recommended for you. Even healthy young adults need protection from diseases like the flu, whooping cough and HPV. Find out more: <http://go.usa.gov/chtw9> #NIAM16

Sample Tweets

Use these sample tweets as they are—or as a starting point to customize and localize your own tweets. Check the [Web Links and Resources](#) section on page 10 for more ideas of links you can use to illustrate or enliven your social media messages. CDC's Guide to Writing for Social Media is a great online resource at:

www.cdc.gov/socialmedia/tools/guidelines/pdf/guidetowritingforsocialmedia.pdf.

Parents of Children of All Ages

Why are preventable disease outbreaks rare in schools now? Most parents ensure their children are up to date on vaccines. <http://1.usa.gov/InPEhA> #NIAM16

Need info on back-to-school vaccinations? Read more for info on the shots recommended for your child. <http://1.usa.gov/InPEhA> #NIAM16

Vaccines protect the children who receive them and also the other children and staff at schools and child care. #NIAM16

Vaccination is one of the best ways parents can protect infants, children and teens from 16 potentially harmful diseases before they go off to college. <http://1.usa.gov/InPEhA> #NIAM16

Checking off your to do list before the kids head back to school? Remember to get everyone in your family the vaccines they need. #NIAM16

Parents of Babies & Young Children

Has your child missed one or more of his shots? It's not too late to catch up! This tool can help <https://www.vacscheduler.org/> #NIAM16

It's #NIAM16! Quickly see when your child needs each vaccine with CDC's parent friendly immunization schedule. <http://go.usa.gov/4EBB> #NIAM16

It's National Immunization Awareness Month! Protect your baby from 14 serious diseases by age 2—find out how! <http://go.usa.gov/4EBB> #NIAM16

Your child can still catch serious diseases like #measles & #whoopingcough. Protect them w/ vaccines. <http://1.usa.gov/InPEhA> #NIAM16

Find tips to prepare for your baby's next well visit & learn what vaccines he'll need. <http://1.usa.gov/InPEhA> #NIAM16

Want vaccine info based on your child's age? <http://1.usa.gov/InPEhA> #NIAM16

Parents of Preteens & Teens

Beat the rush. Get your preteens and teens back-to-school vaccines now: <http://go.usa.gov/chHcS> #NIAM16

Are your preteens and teens up-to-date on all the vaccines they need? Learn more: <http://go.usa.gov/chtDz> #NIAM16

Don't let your child miss out on activities & fun during the school year. Learn how to protect your preteens and teens from serious diseases: <http://go.usa.gov/chHcS> #NIAM16

School starts soon – is your child fully vaccinated? Call their doctor today. <http://go.usa.gov/chtDz> #NIAM16

Is HPV vaccination on your back-to-school checklist? Learn more: <http://go.usa.gov/chHcy> #NIAM16

Parents of Young Adults

Do you know how to protect your college student from meningitis? <http://go.usa.gov/chtwA> #NIAM16

College students need 4 vaccines to prevent serious diseases. Is your college student protected from these diseases? <http://go.usa.gov/chtw9> #NIAM16

Young Adults

Beat the rush. Get the vaccines you'll need for college now: <http://go.usa.gov/chtw9> #NIAM16

Off to college? What vaccines do you need? Take this CDC quiz: <http://go.usa.gov/chtwT> #NIAM16

Off to college? You need 4 vaccines to prevent flu, whooping cough, HPV and meningococcal disease. Are you protected? <http://go.usa.gov/chtw9> #NIAM16

Web Links & Resources

Here you will find links and resources from CDC and many other coalitions and partner organizations that are specific to the school-age children.

For Parents

CDC: Vaccines Website for Parents

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents

CDC: Protect Your Child at Every Age

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/protecting-children

CDC: Who Sets the Immunization Schedule?

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/sets-schedule.html

CDC: Human Papillomavirus Website

www.cdc.gov/hpv

CDC: Vaccines Recommended for Young Adults

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adults/rec-vac/index.html

CDC: Flu Free Resources

Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP): Vaccine Education Center

www.chop.edu/service/vaccine-education-center/home.html

American Academy of Pediatrics

www2.aap.org/immunization/index.html

NFID: AdolescentVaccination.org

www.adolescentvaccination.org/

Every Child By Two: Vaccinate Your Family

ww.vaccinateyourfamily.org

For Healthcare Professionals

CDC: Provider Resources for Vaccine Conversations with Parents

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/patient-ed/conversations/index.html

CDC: HPV Information and Resources for Clinicians

www.cdc.gov/hpv/hcp/index.html

Immunization Action Coalition: Vaccine Summaries for Infants and Children

12 handouts about childhood diseases/vaccines for patients and parents
www.immunize.org/handouts/vaccine-summaries.asp

Materials for Parents of Young Children

PSAs, Print Ads, Posters, Flyers, Drop-In Articles

CDC: Many materials for use during NIAM are located on the National Infant Immunization Week website - English & Spanish

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niiw/index.html

CDC: Print Ads and Posters

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niiw/promotional/print-materials/ads-posters.html#posters



CDC: Radio PSAs, TV PSAs, videos

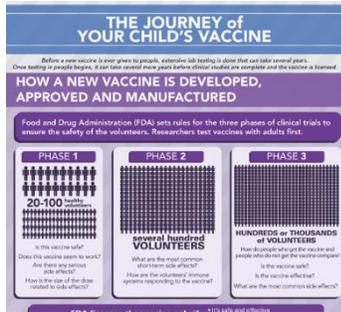
www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niiw/web-etools.html?tab=2#TabbedPanels1



Infographics

CDC: The Journey of Your Child's Vaccine

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/infographics/journey-of-child-vaccine.html



CDC: Protecting Babies from Whooping Cough

English: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/infographics/protect-babies-from-whooping-cough.html>

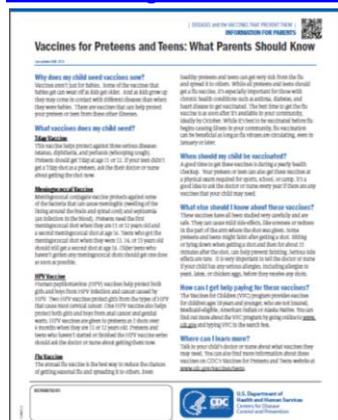
Spanish: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/infographics/protect-babies-from-whooping-cough-sp.html>



Materials for Parents of Preteens & Teens

CDC: Print Materials

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/who/teens/products/print-materials.html



- Posters
- Print ads
- Flyers
- Fact sheets

CDC: Ready-to-Publish (Matte) Articles

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/who/teens/products/matte.html>

CDC: Radio PSAs, TV PSAs, videos

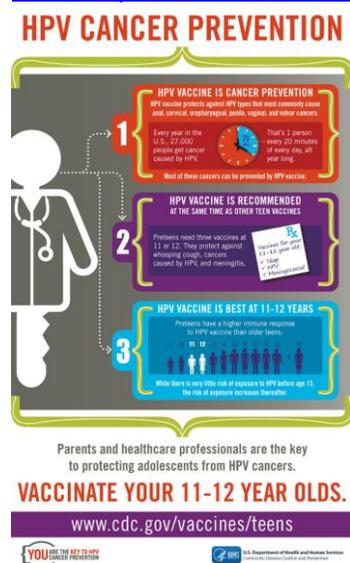
www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niw/web-etools.html?tab=2#TabbedPanels1



Infographics

CDC: HPV Cancer Prevention

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/who/teens/products/downloads/print-materials/hpv-cancer-prevention-11x17-p.pdf



CDC: Three Things Parents Should Know about Preventing Cancer

<http://www.cdc.gov/hpv/infographics/3-things-parents.html>



Measles Resources

www.cdc.gov/measles/resources/parents-caregivers.html



- Webpages
- Fact Sheets
- FAQ Section
- Posters
- Infographics
- Video PSA

CDC: Materials for Childcare Centers and Providers

www.cdc.gov/measles/resources/parents-caregivers.html

CDC: Additional Vaccine Fact Sheets

www.cdc.gov/measles/resources/parents-caregivers.html

CDC: Spanish Materials for Parents & Caregivers

www.cdc.gov/measles/resources/spanish.html



- Webpages
- Posters
- Fact Sheet
- Podcasts
- Infographic

More Resources for Parents

CDC: Infant Immunization FAQs

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/parent-questions.html

CDC: Vaccine When your Child Is Sick

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/patient-ed/conversations/downloads/fs-child-sick.pdf

CDC: Combination Vaccines

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/conversations/downloads/fs-combo-vac.pdf

CDC: MMR Vaccine Safety

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/conversations/downloads/vacsafe-mmr-color-office.pdf

CDC: Understanding How Vaccines work

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/conversations/downloads/vacsafe-understand-color-office.pdf

CDC: Well Child Visit Tracker

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/downloads/milestones-tracker.pdf

CDC: Grow Up Healthy! Growth Chart

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/downloads/growth-chart-parents.pdf

CDC: 9 Tips to Make Shots Less Stressful...For You and Your Baby

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/visit/less-stressful.html

CDC: How to Hold Your Child during Vaccinations

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/tools/holds-factsheet.html