



Childhood Vaccinations Fact Sheet

Are vaccines safer than the diseases?

Yes! Vaccines are much safer than the diseases they prevent. For example, the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine rarely causes side effects. But if 10,000 children got measles, about 2,000 would need to go to the hospital, 500 could get pneumonia, and 10 to 30 could die. With the vaccine, most side effects are very mild, like a slight fever.

Why do kids need vaccines for diseases that aren't common anymore?

Even if a disease isn't common in the U.S., it still exists in other countries. If people stop getting vaccines, those diseases can come back quickly just like a dam breaking and causing a flood. Vaccines help protect not just you, but also babies, older people, and those who are too sick to get vaccinated.

How do we know vaccines are safe?

Vaccines go through many tests before doctors give them to people. In the U.S., scientists use systems like VAERS (Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System) and VSD (Vaccine Safety Datalink) to check if a vaccine causes any problems. If a vaccine is found to be unsafe, it is quickly taken off the market. For example, a rotavirus vaccine was stopped in 1999 when it was linked to a rare stomach issue.

Why do kids today get more vaccines than in the past?

Today, kids get vaccines for more diseases than kids did in the 1980s. But modern vaccines are made to be gentler on the immune system. For example, in 1983, kids got vaccines for 7 diseases using over 3,000 antigens. Now, kids are protected from 15 diseases using just 180 antigens. This means fewer germs for their immune systems to fight all at once.

Do vaccines weaken the immune system?

No. Vaccines help train the immune system to fight diseases without making you sick. You don't need to catch a disease to build immunity. Vaccines allow your body to prepare for an illness, like getting the answers before the test.

Why can't people sue vaccine companies directly?

In the U.S., vaccine companies can't be sued right away. Instead, people go through the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (VICP). This program was created to make sure people can get help if they are hurt by a vaccine, while also making sure companies keep making life-saving vaccines.

Why are vaccine rules different in other countries?

Countries have different vaccine rules based on their resources and which diseases are most common. For example, some countries use oral polio vaccines because they are cheaper and easier to give, while the U.S. uses a different type to avoid rare side effects.

Do doctors get paid to give vaccines?

Doctors don't get money from vaccine companies. Some insurance programs may give small rewards to doctors who make sure their patients are vaccinated, but many doctors lose money giving vaccines because they must pay for storage and supplies.

Do vaccines cause autism?

No. Large studies with millions of kids show no link between vaccines and autism. The idea that vaccines cause autism came from a fake study in the 1990s, and the doctor who wrote it lost his medical license.

This information is based on [this document](#) from Your Local Epidemiologist that was created in partnership with the Yale School of Public Health. It has been shortened and simplified to ensure easy understanding. This document has been reviewed for accuracy by Chapa-De Physician and Medical Director, Dr. Alinea Stevens.

For more detailed information and a list of sources please see: https://chapa-de.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Childhood_Vaccinations_Fact_Sheet-1.pdf