

SINAI HEALTH LINK

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HEALTH LINK

1-888-AT-SINAI (1-888-287-4624)

IMMUNIZE! IT'S YOUR KIDS' BEST SHOT

We can't see them, hear them or feel them, but billions of germs are out there, waiting to attack.

Millions are in our bodies right now. Most are harmless, or actually help us.

But many are not as nice. If someone is sick, or if the germ is dangerous enough, there can be serious problems.

Children are at the greatest risk. Why? Because their bodies haven't built up immunity yet – they can't fight off disease, says Lamorris Perry, MD, a children's doctor at Mount Sinai Hospital in Chicago.

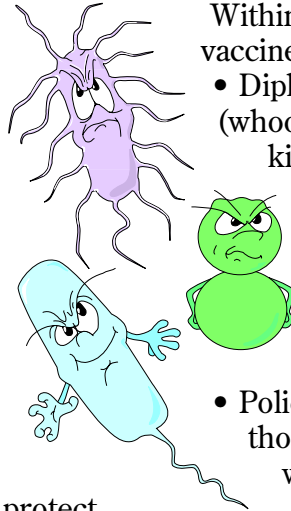
But there is a powerful, safe way to protect them. It's called immunization. The doctor gives your child a shot of vaccine – a safe form of the same germs that can make him or her sick – and the body starts building the immunity it needs to fight off the disease. The protection lasts for years, or even a lifetime.

"We may never be able to prevent every sickness with a shot," Dr. Perry says, "but parents should give their children the protection of every vaccine available."

There are different vaccines for different diseases, and several should be given when your child is just a baby – long before he or she starts school. Some are given more than once, so their protection gets stronger over time.

A list of what every child should have, and when, is on the other side of this page.

The first shot a baby needs is given at birth. It prevents hepatitis-B – a dangerous disease that can lead to liver cancer and other problems.



Within a few weeks of birth, it's time to start vaccines that protect against:

- Diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (whooping cough). One vaccine now keeps kids safe from three diseases that used to kill or sicken tens of thousands of people every year.
- Meningitis. Two vaccines, Hib and Prevnar, prevent this disease, which causes brain damage, deafness, epilepsy, even death.
- Polio. Not long ago, it killed and crippled thousands of children. Then a vaccine was discovered. Now it's rare, but it is not gone.
- Hepatitis A. It's another kind of hepatitis.
- Measles, mumps and rubella (also called German or three-day measles).
- Chicken pox.

Some of these diseases used to be a normal part of childhood. But, sometimes, they damaged hearing, left scars and caused other serious problems.

Thanks to vaccines, most kids don't get them anymore. But some still do, because they aren't immunized – even though it's safe, cheap and, sometimes, free.

"We have kids at Mount Sinai with complications from mumps, measles, whooping cough and chicken pox," Dr. Perry says. "And it's all preventable."

By making sure your kids are properly immunized, you give them the protection they need, he says. You also give them the gift of a healthier, safer life.

**TO HAVE YOUR CHILD IMMUNIZED,
OR TO SEE A SINAI DOCTOR FOR ANY REASON,
CALL 1-888-AT-SINAI (1-888-287-4624); TTY (773) 257-6289**

How to Protect Your Kids	
When your child is:	He or she needs these shots:
Born	Hepatitis B
1 Month Old	Hepatitis B
2 Months Old	Diphtheria, Tetanus & Pertussis; Hib; Prevnar; Polio
4 Months Old	Diphtheria, Tetanus & Pertussis; Hib; Prevnar; Polio
6 Months Old	Hepatitis B; Diphtheria, Tetanus & Pertussis; Hib; Prevnar
12 Months Old	Measles, Mumps & Rubella; Chicken pox
15 Months Old	Hib; Prevnar
18 Months Old	Diphtheria, Tetanus & Pertussis; Polio
24 Months Old	Hepatitis A
30 Months Old	Hepatitis A
4 Years Old*	Diphtheria, Tetanus & Pertussis; Polio; Measles, Mumps & Rubella
14 Years Old*	Diphtheria & Tetanus

**Older children may not have had hepatitis and chicken pox shots as infants. Check your records and ask your doctor if your kids need them.*

Tips to stay healthy – or get better

Vaccines don't stop all diseases. But you and your kids will get sick less often, and less seriously, if you do just a few simple things – like washing your hands often.

Colds, stomach aches and mild flu aren't that serious, but they make kids miserable, and cause parents to lose work time.

Other diseases are more dangerous. Salmonella, shigella and hepatitis-A are stomach and intestinal illnesses that can kill.

But you cut the chance of getting them just by washing your hands with soap, especially before eating, and after using the bathroom or changing a diaper.

Is it safe?

Parents often want to know if immunization could make their kids sick. Some vaccines do carry a very tiny risk of causing problems, Dr. Lamorris Perry says. But in every case, the diseases they protect against are much more dangerous. Always ask your child's doctor if you are concerned. But if the doctor says it's safe, make sure your youngsters get all the protection they need.

Ask Your Sinai Doctor

Q. *How contagious is it when someone sneezes on or near another person?*

A. Thousands of germs go flying with every sneeze, so use a handkerchief or, better yet, a tissue. But sneezes aren't as contagious as your hand is when it touches dangerous germs and then you put it in your mouth or near your eyes or nose. So wash your hands often!



If your child does get sick, here are some tips:

- Nothing cures the common cold, or even shortens it. Forget antibiotics or "deep heat" salves on the chest. Salves can irritate skin.
- For colds or breathing illness, steam is best. You can use a vaporizer. But 15 minutes in a steamed-up bathroom with the hot water running works just as well.
- For minor diarrhea, eliminate fruit juice and use lots of rehydration solutions, such as Pedialyte. But if the baby is less than 6 months, or the problem doesn't stop, call the doctor.

For information on Sinai health and community services, call 1-888-AT-SINAI (1-888-287-4624); TTY (773) 257-6289.