

Vaccine Facts:

Why You and your Family Need Vaccines

From babies to adults, people need vaccines to protect them from potentially dangerous infectious diseases. Without vaccines, children and adults are at risk for serious illness and even death from vaccine-preventable diseases.

Ensuring the safety and effectiveness of vaccines used in the U.S. is one of the FDA's top priorities. Here are the facts on vaccines for you and your family.

The FDA has oversight of the safety, effectiveness and quality of vaccines used in the U.S.

Vaccines to prevent infectious diseases are given to millions of babies, children,

adolescents and adults, and it is critical that they meet the FDA's safety and effectiveness standards. Vaccines have prevented countless cases of disease and disability and have saved millions of lives.

Vaccines work.

Because immunization programs of the 20th and 21st centuries have been so successful, many people today have never seen the various vaccine-preventable diseases that were once common, including polio, diphtheria, rubella (German measles), and chickenpox.

Vaccines save lives.

Infectious diseases that once killed or harmed many infants, children and adults



could reemerge if people aren't vaccinated. The germs (viruses and bacteria) that cause vaccine-preventable diseases still exist and can harm people who are not vaccinated.

Vaccination helps protect communities.

If too many individuals choose not to vaccinate themselves or their children, some diseases that are now rare or nonexistent in the U.S. may resurface. For example, measles is one of the most contagious respiratory diseases in the world and has the potential to be life-threatening for some people. Outbreaks in the U.S. continue to occur because measles is common in many parts of the world, unvaccinated travelers with measles are bringing the disease into the U.S. from other countries, and measles can spread in communities in the U.S. where groups of people are unvaccinated.

Most side effects from vaccines are mild.

A vaccine is a medical product. Like any medicine, vaccines can

cause side effects. But most are minor and short-lived, such as a low-grade fever, or pain and redness at the injection site. Vaccines are safe and severe side effects are rare. The risk of being harmed by vaccines is much smaller than the risk of serious illness from the diseases they prevent. Let your health care professional know about any questions or concerns you have about vaccines.



The FDA's evaluation to determine the safety and effectiveness of vaccines is among the most robust in the world.

Vaccine studies are carefully designed to evaluate safety and effectiveness, keeping in mind that millions of people may receive the vaccine. Vaccines don't make you sick with the disease they are preventing. When determining whether to approve or authorize a vaccine

for emergency use, the FDA bases its decisions on its analysis of the benefits and risks for the intended population who will receive the vaccine.

Vaccines work by mimicking the infectious bacteria or viruses that cause disease.

Vaccination stimulates the body's immune system to build up defenses against the infectious bacteria or virus without causing the disease. After vaccination, the immune system is better prepared to respond quickly and forcefully when the body comes across the real disease-causing organism.



There are real dangers for the health of kids who are unvaccinated.

Some people are surprised to learn that children can be harmed by or even die of measles, influenza and other diseases that can be prevented by vaccines.

Learn the facts about the benefits and risks of vaccines, along with the potential consequences of not vaccinating against infectious diseases.

- [Vaccines Protect Children From Harmful Infectious Diseases | FDA](#)
- [Vaccination Is the Best Protection Against Measles | FDA](#)
- [Vaccines for Children - A Guide for Parents and Caregivers | FDA](#)
- [Questions about Vaccines | FDA](#)
- [Vaccine Development-101 | FDA](#)

