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Baby Shots: Questions Parents Ask

WHAT ARE VACCINATIONS?

Vaccinations protect your child against serious diseases. Most vaccinations are given as a shot. The words “vaccination” and “immunization” mean the same thing.

WHAT DISEASES DO VACCINES PROTECT AGAINST?

Vaccines protect against measles, mumps, rubella, hepatitis B, polio, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), Hib disease, chickenpox, and pneumococcal disease. Vaccines can’t prevent children from getting minor illnesses like colds. They can keep children safe from many serious diseases. Without vaccinations, your child could get very sick.

ISN’T ALL THIS TALK ABOUT DISEASES JUST A WAY TO SCARE PARENTS SO THEY’LL BRING THEIR CHILDREN IN FOR SHOTS?

NO! Many of these diseases still kill people. From 1989 to 1991, more than 150 people in the United States died from measles and thousands more were permanently damaged. Children in the United States also continue to die from chicken pox. When children get measles, chickenpox and other diseases that vaccines could have prevented, they can also suffer from brain damage, hearing loss, heart problems, and lung damage.

I DON’T KNOW ANYONE WHO HAS HAD MUMPS OR RUBELLA. WHY DOES MY BABY NEED THESE SHOTS?

You might not think that these diseases are a serious threat today because you don’t see or hear much about them, but they still are around. If we stop vaccinating against these diseases, many more people will become infected. Vaccinating your child will keep him or her safe.

ARE VACCINATIONS SAFE?

Most vaccines cause only minor side effects, such as soreness where the shot was given or a slight fever. These side effects do not last and are treatable. Serious reactions are very rare. Remember, if your child gets one of these dangerous childhood diseases, the risks of the disease are far greater than the risk of a serious vaccine reaction. If you have concerns, talk to your doctor or nurse.

WHAT IF MY CHILD HAS A COLD, A FEVER, OR IS TAKING ANTIBIOTICS? CAN HE OR SHE STILL GET VACCINATED?

YES. Your child can be vaccinated if he or she has a mild illness such as a cold, a slight fever, or is taking antibiotics. Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have questions.

HOW MANY TIMES DO I NEED TO TAKE MY BABY IN FOR VACCINATIONS?

A LOT! Your baby needs at least seven visits to the doctor for vaccinations before for he or she is two years old. All THESE VISITS ARE NECESSARY BECAUSE THERE ARE ELEVEN DISEASES YOUR BABY NEEDS TO BE PROTECTED FROM AND MOST REQUIRE SEVERAL DOSES FOR FULL PROTECTION. Your child also needs vaccinations between the ages of 4 & 6, & then again when they reach between the ages of 11 & 12.

HOW DO I KNOW WHEN TO TAKE MY BABY IN FOR SHOTS?

If you are not sure, call your doctor's office (909/629-5067) or your local health department (1-800-427-8700) to find out when the next shots are due. Every time your child gets vaccinated, make sure you know when to bring him or her back for the next set of shots.

HOW DO I KEEP TRACK OF MY BABY'S SHOTS?

You need a personal record card of your child's immunizations. This card should be brought with you to all physical appointments. Whenever your child receives vaccinations, make sure your clinic updates your child's shot record.

WHAT IF I MISS AN APPOINTMENT? DOES MY BABY HAVE TO GET THE SHOTS ALL OVER AGAIN?

NO. If your baby misses some vaccinations, it's not necessary to start over. Your clinic will continue the shots from where they left off.

WHAT IF MY CHILD IS OLDER THAN TWO? IS IT TOO LATE TO GET MY CHILD VACCINATED?

NO. Although it's best to have your child vaccinated as a baby, it's never too late to start. If your baby did not receive their shots, now is the time to start

WHAT IF I CAN'T AFFORD TO GET MY CHILD VACCINATED?

Vaccinations are usually free for children when families can't afford them. You can check with our billing department (909/ 620-1935) or you may call 1-800-232-2522 or your local or state health department to find out where you can go for vaccinations. Remember: YOUR CHILD'S HEALTH DEPENDS ON IT!

AND HERE'S A FRIENDLY REMINDER FOR PARENTS:

Adults need shots, too! Call your clinic or health department to find out what shots you need or when your next shots are due! Your baby is counting on you!