

The truth about childhood vaccines (shots)

Members of Aetna Better Health® Kids (CHIP) no cost for childhood vaccines.



Some people have concerns about giving their kids shots, but childhood vaccines help prevent major health problems, such as infertility, diarrheal infections, muscle paralysis, brain damage, blindness, deafness and cancer.

How vaccines work

- Vaccines help the body learn how to defend itself from disease without the dangers of a full-blown infection.
- They imitate an infection to activate the immune system.
- The active ingredient in all vaccines is an antigen, which causes the immune system to begin producing antibodies to fight infection. There are different types of antigens:
 - Weakened or killed bacteria or viruses
 - Bits of their exterior surface or genetic material, or
 - Bacterial toxin treated to make it non-toxic.
- Side effects are a normal part of how vaccines work. Your child may get a low fever or body aches. This is just evidence that the shot—and your child's body—are both doing their jobs.

It is better to prevent diseases than to treat them.

- Vaccines have greatly reduced or eliminated 16 of the worst diseases that affect children.
- When most people in the community are immune to a disease, it is less likely for that disease to spread. If people skip vaccines, diseases can spread much more quickly.

Childhood vaccines are tested and safe*

- A vaccine is researched for 10-15 years before use.
- After lab tests, it must go through years of clinical trials on diverse groups of people. The FDA then approves the vaccine after reviewing the results. Finally, a committee of experts in the CDC reviews the information and makes recommendations for its use. The Director of the CDC makes the final decision to approve it.
- Even after it is approved, the CDC and FDA continue to monitor it.

*Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. Developing Safe & Effective Vaccines. 8/9/24. [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).

AetnaBetterHealthKidsPA.com
1-800-822-2447 (TTY: 711)

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Aetna Better Health® Kids
A CHIP Health Plan

This chart shows what vaccines are needed and when. Each dose is based on the age a child's immune system provides the best protection after the shot, as well as when the child is at highest risk for a disease. Talk with your health care provider about vaccines for your child.

	Birth	1 month	2 months	4 months	6 months	8 months	9 months	12 months	15 months	18 months	19-23 months	2-3 years	4-6 years	9 years	11-12 years	13-15 years	16 years	17-18 years			
1vCOV					Vaccination based on shared clinical decision-making																
DTaP			Dose 1	Dose 2	Dose 3				Dose 4				Dose 5								
Flu					2 doses first year, then 1 dose annually										1 dose annually						
HepA									2 dose series, 6 months apart												
HepB	Dose 1	Dose 2			Dose 3																
Hib			Dose 1	Dose 2	Dose 3*				Dose 3 or 4												
HPV																See notes†					
IPV			Dose 1	Dose 2	Dose 3								Dose 4								
Men-ACWY																Dose 1			Dose 2		
MMR									Dose 1					Dose 2							
PCV			Dose 1	Dose 2	Dose 3				Dose 4												
RSV	Dose 1					Dose 2 may be needed for high risk individuals															
RV			Dose 1	Dose 2	Dose 3*																
Tdap																Dose 1					
VAR									Dose 1					Dose 2							

*Some children should get this dose of vaccine at this age depending on their dose series.

† HPV vaccination routinely recommended at age 11–12 years (can start at age 9 years) and catch-up HPV vaccination recommended for all persons through age 18 years if not adequately vaccinated.

Source: CDC. "Your child needs vaccines as they grow!" 2/11/26. [cdc.gov/vaccines/imz-schedules](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/imz-schedules).

This is general health information and should not replace the advice or care you get from your provider. Always ask your provider about your own health care needs. **Your managed care plan may not cover all your health care expenses. Read your member handbook carefully to determine which health care services are covered. Call Aetna Better Health® Kids at 1-800-822-2447 (TTY: 711).**

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ATENCIÓN: Si habla otro idioma que no sea inglés, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. También, están disponibles sin cargo ayudas y servicios auxiliares apropiados para brindarle información en formatos accesibles. Llame al 1-800-385-4104 (TTY/PA RELAY: 711) o hable con su proveedor.

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