

Immunizations: Importance, schedule, and potential side effects.

Preventing illnesses in children starts as soon as they are born with immunizations. Vaccines provide one of the most effective protections for children from serious, preventable illnesses, and are an important part of practices to **care for your newborn**. The more you know about how immunizations work, when they are due and what they can cause simplifies the process of making confident and educated decisions as a parent.

Why Immunizations are Important

Immunizations are important for your child for numerous reasons:

- **Protecting your child from serious diseases**

Immunizations help the body build up resistance against harmful viruses and bacteria. There are diseases that cause potentially life-threatening complications for children from measles to polio, hepatitis, and diphtheria, for instance. Immunizations train the immune system to recognize and safely fight against these infectious diseases. When children are vaccinated, antibodies are developed that can protect them without having to become sick. And, for many vaccines that protection can last years, sometimes even a lifetime.

- **Protecting the Community**

Vaccination protects not only your child, but the community as well, particularly vulnerable individuals such as newborns, seniors, or people who have a weakened immune system and cannot receive vaccinations. This is referred to as herd immunity and prevents the spread of infectious diseases through communities.

- **Preventing Long-Term Impacts to Health**

Some infectious diseases, such as measles, can have long-lasting effects that include developmental delay, hearing loss, or damage to organ systems. Immunizations can help prevent these effects, and reduce a burden on families and health systems.

Vaccination Schedules To Care For Your Newborn

Vaccination schedules are intentionally designed by pediatric and public health experts, in order to protect children when they are at most risk. Although there may be slight variations in schedules depending on the region or a medical opinion, most schedules will be similar.

- At birth children get vaccinations like BCG, Hepatitis B, and Oral Polio Vaccine.

- Between 6 weeks to 14 weeks, vaccinations include: DTP, IPV, Hepatitis B (Dose no. 2), Hib, and Rotavirus vaccine.
- Between 6 to 9 months: influenza and Measles vaccines are administered.
- Between 12 to 18 months: MMP, TCV, Varicella, and Hepatitis A vaccines are given.

Side Effects of Vaccines

The majority of vaccines are very safe. However, there can be mild side effects that signal the body is developing protection. These reactions are usually self-limiting, and will resolve in a day to two after vaccination. Use of a cool compress, plenty of fluids, and rest will help manage side effects like:

- Low fever
- Fatigue
- Swelling in the injection area
- Soreness
- Redness
- Irritability
- Rash (typically mild)

When to Seek Medical Attention

In case your child is experiencing an allergic reaction which is rare but looks like high fever, difficulty breathing, or swelling of the face or throat, medical attention is essential.

Keep Your Child Healthy With Altrus

Immunizations are non-negotiable when it comes to care for your newborn. Every parent needs to keep up with all the immunizations that their child has received and needs to receive, making sure they get it on time. This is where we at Altrus Healthcare become your partner. We help keep your child safe by guiding through all the immunizations needed and the right time for their administration. To learn more, get in touch with our specialists.

Conclusion

Vaccination is one of the easiest, yet most powerful ways to keep a child safe. Each dose that is taken today truly means one less avoidable emergency visit, reduced missed school days, and less emotional stress in the future. For parents, understanding that the small steps they take

today for their child are keeping that child's future safe, helps them feel more confident and to be at ease.