

How routine vaccines help protect you, your family, and your community.

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Vaccines are the best defense we have against preventable disease, and our best chance of keeping our friends and family safe and healthy. Learn more about routine vaccines, how they work, and where to get them.



What are routine vaccines?

Routine vaccines are those the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend for everyone in the U.S. Children get many routine vaccines before they start school, and protection from vaccines often lasts a lifetime. Some routine vaccines need to be given throughout life to keep working well, such as the flu vaccine.



What are vaccine preventable diseases?

Vaccine preventable diseases are those that can be prevented by getting vaccinated. Some examples are:

- Measles
- Rotavirus
- Tetanus

Thanks to widespread vaccination, some diseases that used to be common are now very rare in the U.S., such as polio.



Why should I get routine vaccines?

By getting your routine vaccines, you can:

- Lower your chance of getting sick from preventable diseases
- Lower your chance of hospitalization and death
- Reduce the likelihood of spreading disease to your family and friends
- Protect those who are at high risk of getting very sick, such as children, older adults, and people with underlying health conditions, like diabetes or heart disease
- Help keep yourself, your family, and community healthy



Are vaccines safe?

All routine vaccines have been carefully studied and tested in clinical trials (research studies with volunteers) to make sure they are safe and work well to prevent disease. Before vaccines can be given to people, they have to be approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Even after a vaccine is approved, it is monitored to check for possible side effects.



Do vaccines have side effects?

Like any medicine, vaccines can have side effects, like pain or swelling in the part of the arm where the shot is given. When they do happen, vaccine side effects are usually mild and go away within a few days. Severe side effects or allergic reactions from vaccines are very rare.

Tell your healthcare provider if you have any allergies, such as to yeast, latex, or chicken eggs, before getting a vaccine. Your doctor can help you decide which vaccines are right for you.

To learn more, see the [vaccine safety information](#) offered by Vaccinate Your Family.



Can I still get sick if I'm vaccinated?

Vaccines work very well to protect you from getting sick, but no vaccine offers 100% protection. It is possible for you to get a disease even if you're vaccinated, which is called a "breakthrough case".

However, if you do get sick, you're likely to have milder symptoms and less likely to be hospitalized.

The vaccines you need depend on several factors, such as your overall health, age, job, and your day-to-day activities.

Talk to a healthcare provider about which vaccines are right for you and your family.

You can also learn more about the vaccines needed at every age from [Vaccinate Your Family](#).

You can get routine vaccines at many places, such as:

- Doctor's offices
- Some local health departments
- Pharmacies, such as Walgreens or CVS
- Urgent care or community health clinics

Visit findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov to find a health center near you.

Most health insurance plans cover vaccines at no cost to you. If you don't have health insurance and need help paying for vaccines, try these tips:

- Contact your local health department and ask about programs that offer vaccines for free or at a lower cost. Find your local health department here: [CDC - Health Department Directories - Public Health Gateway](#)
- Contact a [Federally Qualified Health Center \(FQHC\)](#) in your area to ask if they offer vaccines at a lower cost
- Children age 18 or younger may be able to get free vaccines through the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program. Learn more at the [Chicago Department of Public Health](#)



Which vaccines do I need?



Where can I get routine vaccines?



How can I get help paying for vaccines?