

## Communication Toolkit: School-Age Children



*Updated 6/9/17*

Getting vaccinated according to the recommended immunization schedule is one of the most important things a parent can do to protect their child's health. Diseases can quickly spread among groups of children who aren't vaccinated. Whether it's a baby starting at a new child care facility, a toddler heading to preschool, a student going back to elementary, middle or high school – or even a college freshman – parents should check their child's vaccination records.

Child care facilities, preschool programs, schools and colleges are prone to outbreaks of infectious diseases. Children in these settings can easily spread illnesses to one another due to poor hand washing, not covering their coughs, and other factors such as interacting in crowded environments.

When children are not vaccinated, they are at increased risk for disease and can spread disease to others in their play groups, child care centers, classrooms and communities – including babies who are too young to be fully vaccinated and people with weakened immune systems due to cancer and other health conditions.

Additionally, states may require children who are entering child care or school to be vaccinated against certain diseases. Colleges and universities may have their own requirements, especially for students living in residence halls. Parents should check with their child's doctor, school or the local health department to learn about the requirements in their state or county.

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## Sample Key Messages

Use key messages as the basis for talking points, presentations, media interviews, news releases, social media messages or other outreach materials. Localize and tailor your messages with information or stories from your own organization or community.

### **Vaccinating according to the recommended immunization schedule provides your child with safe and effective protection against preventable diseases.**

- Between the time your child is born and when they go off to college, they'll get vaccines to protect against a number of serious diseases.
- Some children at your child care center may be too young to get certain vaccines, and are therefore vulnerable to diseases.
  - By vaccinating your child according to the recommended schedule, you'll be protecting their classmates as well.
  - You will also be helping to protect people in your community who cannot receive vaccines for medical reasons (e.g., people with weakened immune systems, such as some people with cancer and people who have received transplants).

### **Vaccines are recommended for children of all ages.**

- The need for vaccination does not end in childhood. Vaccines are recommended throughout our lives based on age, lifestyle, occupation, travel locations, medical conditions, and previous vaccination history.
- The protection from some childhood vaccines wear off with time, and children are more likely to get certain diseases like meningococcal disease and cancer-causing HPV infections as they get older. Staying up to date on recommended vaccines keeps your child protected against serious diseases.
- Teens and young adults should also make sure they are up to date on all the vaccines recommended during childhood and adolescence. Additionally, states may require children who are entering college to be vaccinated against certain diseases.
- You can send your kids off to college protected from serious diseases by making sure they've received all the vaccines recommended for them.
  - Infectious diseases tend to spread wherever large groups of people gather together. Outbreaks of serogroup B meningococcal disease have been reported from college campuses during the last several years. [Learn more about vaccine recommendations for those at increased risk in community settings.](#)

### **Check your child's vaccine records to make sure they are up to date on all the vaccines they need to stay healthy.**

- Keep your child's vaccine records current and in a safe place.

- If you haven't already, check your child's immunization record and schedule a visit to their physician or clinic. Doing so now will avoid a potential last minute rush and will help ensure there are no surprises on the first day of school.
- Most schools require children to be up to date on vaccinations before enrolling or starting school in order to protect the health of all students. If you are unsure of your state's school immunization requirements, check with your child's doctor, school, child care provider, college health center, or local health department.
- If you need official copies of immunization records for your child, or if you need to update your personal records, there are several places you can look, including your child's doctor, public health clinic, or school; or your state health department.
  - For more information on obtaining vaccination records for your child, visit CDC's [Records & Requirements](#) page.
- Make sure that you provide your child care facility with updated vaccine records each time your child gets a shot.

**Many vaccine-preventable diseases can easily spread in child care and school settings. Protecting your children from preventable diseases will help keep them healthy and in school.**

- Schools are prone to outbreaks of infectious diseases, and school-age children can further spread disease to their families and others with whom they come in contact.
- When a child comes down with an illness such as whooping cough, chickenpox or the flu, he or she may miss at least several days of school while recovering – and somebody will need to stay home to provide care and make trips to the doctor.
  - Children can spread diseases to newborns too young to have received all doses of recommended vaccines, or to people with weakened immune systems, such as some people with cancer and transplant recipients who are also at higher risk of disease.
- Most people in the United States are protected against measles through vaccination, so measles cases in the U.S. are uncommon compared to the number of cases that occurred before a vaccine was available.
  - However, measles is brought into the United States every year by unvaccinated travelers who get measles while they are in other countries. Most measles cases imported into the U.S. come from U.S. residents. They can spread measles to other people who are not protected against measles, which sometimes leads to outbreaks. This can occur in communities with unvaccinated people.
  - Since measles was declared eliminated in the United States in 2000, the annual number of people reported to have measles ranged from a low of 37 people in 2004 to a high of 667 people in 2014. In 2016, there were 70 provisionally reported cases.

### **Vaccines are very safe.**

- Vaccines are thoroughly tested before licensing and carefully monitored after they are licensed to ensure that they are very safe.
- Vaccines are the safest and most effective way to prevent several diseases. They not only protect vaccinated individuals but also help protect entire communities by preventing and reducing the spread of infectious diseases.
- Currently, the United States has the safest, most effective vaccine supply in its history. The country's long-standing vaccine safety system ensures that vaccines are as safe as possible.

### **Talk to your child's doctor or other health care professional to make sure your children get the vaccinations they need when they need them.**

- Take advantage of any visit to the doctor – checkups, sick visits, even physicals for sports or college – to ask the doctor about what vaccinations your child needs.
- Families who need help paying for vaccines should ask their health care professional about the Vaccines for Children program, which provides vaccines at no cost to eligible children who do not otherwise have access to immunization.
  - The Vaccines for Children (VFC) program provides vaccines for children ages 18 years and younger who are uninsured, Medicaid-eligible, American Indian or Alaska Native. Learn more about the [VFC program](#).

## Sample News Release

Customize sample news releases with information, stories or events happening in your community. Submit news releases, articles or op-eds to local news and partner organizations to publish, post on websites, or share through social media. Distribute or make available electronically to key partners and decision-makers.

Word Count: ~279

Audience: Media/Parents

### **Send Your Children Back to School Protected from Serious Diseases**

*National Immunization Awareness Month is a reminder that we all need vaccines throughout our lives.*

Back-to-school season is here. It's time for parents to gather school supplies and back packs. It's also the perfect time to make sure your children are up to date on their vaccines.

To celebrate the importance of immunizations for people of all ages – and make sure children are protected with all the vaccines they need as they go back to school – the *[name of local organization]* is joining with partners nationwide in recognizing August as National Immunization Awareness Month.

*[Insert information on any events local organization is hosting or is aware of.]*

“Getting children all of the vaccines recommended by CDC’s immunization schedule is one of the most important things parents can do to protect their children from serious diseases,” said *[insert name of local official]*. “If you haven’t done so already, now is the time to check with your child’s doctor to find out what vaccines your child needs.”

Vaccines protect against a number of serious and potentially life-threatening diseases.

When children are not vaccinated, they are at increased risk for diseases and can also spread diseases to others in their classrooms and community – including babies who are too young to be fully vaccinated and people with weakened immune systems due to cancer or other health conditions.

Talk to your child’s doctor to find out which vaccines are recommended for them before going back to school.

Parents can find out more about the recommended vaccines at [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/) or *[insert local organization websites]* or call *[insert local organization phone number]*.

###

## Sample Facebook Posts

Use these sample Facebook posts as they are—or as a starting point to customize and localize your own posts. These messages are ideally 250 characters or less to allow the entire post to be viewed in the newsfeed. Check the [Web Links and Resources](#) section on page 11 for more ideas of links you can use to illustrate or enliven your social media messages. CDC’s Guide to Writing for Social Media is a great online resource at: [www.cdc.gov/socialmedia/tools/guidelines/pdf/guidetowritingforsocialmedia.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/socialmedia/tools/guidelines/pdf/guidetowritingforsocialmedia.pdf)

### Parents of Children of All Ages

Your children need vaccines to protect them from several diseases that can be serious, even life-threatening. Find out what vaccines your child needs at every age at: [#NIAM17](http://go.usa.gov/chtsT)

Vaccine-preventable diseases like measles and whooping cough still exist and outbreaks do occur. Learn how you can protect your children from serious diseases at every age: [#NIAM17](http://go.usa.gov/chtsT)

### Parents of Babies & Young Children

Learn about the vaccines your baby needs from CDC’s vaccine website for parents. Find out about diseases vaccines prevent, immunization schedule, possible side effects, how to comfort your baby during vaccine visits, and more: [#NIAM17](http://1.usa.gov/lnPEhA)

CDC has a parent-friendly childhood immunization schedule. Quickly see when your child needs each vaccine so you can stay on schedule and make sure your baby is protected against 14 serious diseases by age 2: [#NIAM17](http://go.usa.gov/4EBB)

### Parents of Preteens & Teens

While your preteens and teens are thinking about all the fun things they did this summer, you are likely thinking about keeping them healthy and safe for the upcoming school year. HPV vaccination is recommended at ages 11-12 to protect against cancer-causing HPV infections. Is HPV vaccination on your back-to-school checklist? [#NIAM17](http://go.usa.gov/chHS9)

Preteens and teens need four vaccines to be protected against serious diseases like the flu and cancers caused by HPV. Make an appointment to make sure your children get all the vaccines they need before they go back to school. #NIAM17

It’s back-to-school time again. Are your preteens protected from cancers caused by HPV? [#NIAM17](http://go.usa.gov/chHcy)

Has your preteen received the #HPV vaccine? Make an appointment with your child’s health care professional today to protect your preteen today from HPV cancers tomorrow. [#NIAM17](http://go.usa.gov/chHSA)

## Parents of Young Adults

Send your child off to college with the best protection against serious disease. College-age young adults need vaccines to prevent serious diseases. Don't wait – make back-to-school appointments for college vaccinations now. <http://go.usa.gov/chtw9> #NIAM17

## Young Adults

College prep includes getting all the vaccines you need before the school year starts. Take CDC's quiz to find out which vaccines you might need: <http://go.usa.gov/chtwT> #NIAM17

Off to college or your chosen career? Before you go, make sure you're up to date on all the vaccines recommended for you. Even healthy young adults need protection from diseases like the flu, meningococcal disease, whooping cough and HPV. Find out more: <http://go.usa.gov/chtw9> #NIAM17

## Sample Tweets

Use these sample tweets as they are—or as a starting point to customize and localize your own tweets. Check the [Web Links and Resources](#) section on page 11 for more ideas of links you can use to illustrate or enliven your social media messages. CDC's Guide to Writing for Social Media is a great online resource at:

[www.cdc.gov/socialmedia/tools/guidelines/pdf/guidetowritingforsocialmedia.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/socialmedia/tools/guidelines/pdf/guidetowritingforsocialmedia.pdf).

### Parents of Children of All Ages

Why are preventable disease outbreaks rare in schools now? Most parents ensure their children are up to date on vaccines. <http://1.usa.gov/InPEhA> #NIAM17

Need info on back-to-school vaccinations? Read more for info on the shots recommended for your child. <http://1.usa.gov/InPEhA> #NIAM17

Vaccines protect the children who receive them and also the other children and staff at schools and child care. #NIAM17

Vaccination is one of the best ways parents can protect infants, children and teens from 16 potentially harmful diseases before they go off to college. <http://1.usa.gov/InPEhA> #NIAM17

Checking off your to-do list before the kids head back to school? Remember to get everyone in your family the vaccines they need. #NIAM17

### Parents of Babies & Young Children

Has your child missed one or more of their shots? It's not too late to catch up! This tool can help <https://www.vacscheduler.org/> #NIAM17

It's #NIAM17! Quickly see when your child needs each vaccine with CDC's parent-friendly immunization schedule. <http://go.usa.gov/4EBB> #NIAM17

It's National Immunization Awareness Month! Protect your baby from 14 serious diseases by age 2—find out how! <http://go.usa.gov/4EBB> #NIAM17

Your child can still catch serious diseases like #measles & #whoopingcough. Protect them w/ vaccines. <http://1.usa.gov/InPEhA> #NIAM17

Find tips to prepare for your baby's next well visit & learn what vaccines they'll need. <http://1.usa.gov/InPEhA> #NIAM17

Want vaccine info based on your child's age? <http://1.usa.gov/InPEhA> #NIAM17

### Parents of Preteens & Teens

Beat the rush. Get your preteens and teens back-to-school vaccines now: <http://go.usa.gov/chHcS> #NIAM17

Are your preteens and teens up to date on all the vaccines they need? Learn more: <http://go.usa.gov/chtzd> #NIAM17

Don't let your child miss out on activities & fun during the school year. Learn how to protect your preteens and teens from serious diseases: <http://go.usa.gov/chHcS> #NIAM17

School starts soon – is your child fully vaccinated? Call their doctor today. <http://go.usa.gov/chtzd> #NIAM17

Is HPV vaccination on your back-to-school checklist? Learn more: <http://go.usa.gov/chHcy> #NIAM17

### Parents of Young Adults

Do you know how to protect your college student from meningococcal #meningitis? <http://go.usa.gov/chtwA> #NIAM17

College students need 4 vaccines to prevent serious diseases. Is your college student protected from these diseases? <http://go.usa.gov/chtw9> #NIAM17

### Young Adults

Beat the rush. Get the vaccines you'll need for college now: <http://go.usa.gov/chtw9> #NIAM17

Off to college? What vaccines do you need? Take this CDC quiz: <http://go.usa.gov/chtwT> #NIAM17

Off to college? You need 4 vaccines to prevent flu, whooping cough, HPV and meningococcal disease. Are you protected? <http://go.usa.gov/chtw9> #NIAM17

## Web Links & Resources

Here you will find links and resources from CDC and many other coalitions and partner organizations that are specific to school-age children.

### For Parents

**CDC:** Vaccines Website for Parents

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents)

**CDC:** Protect Your Child at Every Age

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/protecting-children](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/protecting-children)

**CDC:** Who Sets the Immunization Schedule?

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/sets-schedule.html](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/sets-schedule.html)

**CDC:** Human Papillomavirus Website

[www.cdc.gov/hpv](http://www.cdc.gov/hpv)

**CDC:** Vaccines Recommended for Young Adults

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adults/rec-vac/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adults/rec-vac/index.html)

**CDC:** Flu Free Resources

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/freeresources/index.htm>

**Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP):** Vaccine Education Center

[www.chop.edu/service/vaccine-education-center/home.html](http://www.chop.edu/service/vaccine-education-center/home.html)

**American Academy of Pediatrics**

[www2.aap.org/immunization/index.html](http://www2.aap.org/immunization/index.html)

**NFID:** AdolescentVaccination.org

[www.adolescentvaccination.org/](http://www.adolescentvaccination.org/)

**Every Child By Two:** Vaccinate Your Family

[www.vaccinateyourfamily.org](http://www.vaccinateyourfamily.org)

### For Healthcare Professionals

**CDC:** Provider Resources for Vaccine Conversations with Parents

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/patient-ed/conversations/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/patient-ed/conversations/index.html)

**CDC:** HPV Information and Resources for Clinicians

[www.cdc.gov/hpv/hcp/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/hpv/hcp/index.html)

**Immunization Action Coalition:** Vaccine Summaries for Infants and Children

12 handouts about childhood diseases/vaccines for patients and parents  
[www.immunize.org/handouts/vaccine-summaries.asp](http://www.immunize.org/handouts/vaccine-summaries.asp)

## Materials for Parents of Young Children

### PSAs, Print Ads, Posters, Flyers, Drop-In Articles

**CDC:** Many materials for use during NIAM are located on the National Infant Immunization Week website - English & Spanish

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niiw/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niiw/index.html)

**CDC:** Print Ads and Posters

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niiw/promotional/print-materials/ads-posters.html#posters](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niiw/promotional/print-materials/ads-posters.html#posters)



**CDC:** Radio PSAs, TV PSAs, videos

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niiw/web-etools.html?tab=2#TabbedPanels1](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niiw/web-etools.html?tab=2#TabbedPanels1)



## Infographics

**CDC:** The Journey of Your Child's Vaccine

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/infographics/journey-of-child-vaccine.html](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/infographics/journey-of-child-vaccine.html)



CDC: Ready-to-Publish (Matte) Articles

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/who/teens/products/matte.html>

CDC: Radio PSAs, TV PSAs, videos

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niiw/web-etools.html?tab=2#TabbedPanels1](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niiw/web-etools.html?tab=2#TabbedPanels1)

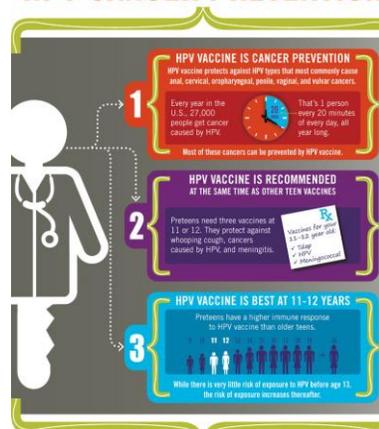


## Infographics

CDC: HPV Cancer Prevention

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/who/teens/products/downloads/print-materials/hpv-cancer-prevention-11x17-p.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/who/teens/products/downloads/print-materials/hpv-cancer-prevention-11x17-p.pdf)

### HPV CANCER PREVENTION



Parents and healthcare professionals are the key to protecting adolescents from HPV cancers.

**VACCINATE YOUR 11-12 YEAR OLDS**

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/teens](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/teens)



## CDC: Three Things Parents Should Know about Preventing Cancer

<http://www.cdc.gov/hpv/infographics/3-things-parents.html>



## Measles Resources

[www.cdc.gov/measles/resources/parents-caregivers.html](http://www.cdc.gov/measles/resources/parents-caregivers.html)



- Webpages
- Fact Sheets
- FAQ Section
- Posters
- Infographics
- Video PSA

## CDC: Materials for Childcare Centers and Providers

[www.cdc.gov/measles/resources/parents-caregivers.html](http://www.cdc.gov/measles/resources/parents-caregivers.html)

## CDC: Additional Vaccine Fact Sheets

[www.cdc.gov/measles/resources/parents-caregivers.html](http://www.cdc.gov/measles/resources/parents-caregivers.html)

## CDC: Spanish Materials for Parents & Caregivers

[www.cdc.gov/measles/resources/spanish.html](http://www.cdc.gov/measles/resources/spanish.html)



- Webpages
- Posters
- Fact Sheet
- Podcasts
- Infographic

## Meningococcal Disease Resources

### CDC: Fact Sheets

- Fact sheet tailored for serogroups A, C, W, & Y meningococcal disease: [What Parents of Preteens and Teens Need to Know](http://www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/downloads/17-275138C2-MeningococcalDis-ACWY-Outbreak-FS.pdf)
- Fact sheet tailored for serogroup B meningococcal disease: [What You Need to Know](https://www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/downloads/17-275138D-MeningococcalDis-B-Outbreak-FS.pdf)

## More Resources for Parents

### CDC: Infant Immunization FAQs

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/parent-questions.html](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/parent-questions.html)

### CDC: Vaccine When your Child Is Sick

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/patient-ed/conversations/downloads/fs-child-sick.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/patient-ed/conversations/downloads/fs-child-sick.pdf)

### CDC: Combination Vaccines

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/conversations/downloads/fs-combo-vac.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/conversations/downloads/fs-combo-vac.pdf)

### CDC: MMR Vaccine Safety

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/conversations/downloads/vacsafe-mmr-color-office.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/conversations/downloads/vacsafe-mmr-color-office.pdf)

### CDC: Understanding How Vaccines work

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/conversations/downloads/vacsafe-understand-color-](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/conversations/downloads/vacsafe-understand-color-)

[office.pdf](#)

**CDC:** Well Child Visit Tracker

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/downloads/milestones-tracker.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/downloads/milestones-tracker.pdf)

**CDC:** Grow Up Healthy! Growth Chart

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/downloads/growth-chart-parents.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/downloads/growth-chart-parents.pdf)

**CDC:** 9 Tips to Make Shots Less Stressful...For You and Your Baby

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/visit/less-stressful.html](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/visit/less-stressful.html)

**CDC:** How to Hold Your Child During Vaccinations

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/tools/holds-factsheet.html](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/tools/holds-factsheet.html)