WHY IMMUNIZE?

Your child's best chance for a healthy life may depend on you protecting him or her from serious childhood diseases. Immunizations are usually given before your child reaches two years of age. Immunizations provide children with the greatest protection against nine major diseases: polio; measles; mumps; rubella (MMR); diphtheria; tetanus; pertussis; haemophilus (Hib) infections; and hepatitis B (HBV).

However, if your child has not been immunized by two years of age, it is not too late.

In fact, California law requires children to have their immunizations BEFORE they attend school or a childcare facility.

The following information should answer most of your questions about immunization procedures.

HOW DOES MY CHILD'S SCHOOL KNOW IF HE/SHE HAS BEEN IMMUNIZED?

Healthcare providers are required to give you current documentation of your child's immunization record whenever immunizations are administered. When your child enters school, the administration office will request a copy of his or her immunization records. You must provide a copy of your child's records before he or she will be admitted for the academic school year.

California Schools' Immunization Law was established by Assembly Bill (AB) 1194, which was approved by the Governor on August 2, 1995. AB 1194 added, for children at the kindergarten level or below, hepatitis B to the list of diseases for which immunizations are required. The law prohibits schools from admitting any pupil to any private or public elementary or secondary school, childcare center, day nursery, nursery school, family day-care home, or developmental center, unless he/she has been fully immunized for certain diseases. Persons with religious objections may be exempted from these provisions.

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DISCLAIMER: **Please contact your local health care facility and/or your family doctor with any questions or concerns before having your child immunized.**

Rev. 3/07

Is your child at risk?

California Schools' Immunization Law

CALIFORNIA SCHOOLS' IMMUNIZATION LAW

ARE THERE ANY CHILDREN WHO SHOULD NOT BE IMMUNIZED?

Certain children should not receive the DTP (diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis) or MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccines. Others may have their immunizations postponed.

For DTP, these children include those with one or more of the following problems:

- a serious reaction to the initial immunizations;
- a previous convulsion or a suspected disease of the nervous system; or
- an illness with an infection or fever when the DTP vaccine is scheduled.

The MMR may not be given if your child:

- is allergic to eggs;
- is taking any medication that interferes with the immune system; or
- has an immune system that is weakened for any reason.

NOTE: A varicella (chickenpox) requirement for kindergarten entry and childcare attendance went into effect July 1, 2001.

I'VE HEARD SOME OF THE VACCINES HAVE SIDE EFFECTS. WHAT CAN I EXPECT?

Possible DTP/DTaP/DT/Td3 side effects:
The DTP vaccine is the one most commonly linked with minor side effects. In the first 24 hours after the shot, your child may be irritable and less energetic than usual. The site of the injection may be red and sensitive, or your child may have a low grade (less than 102 degrees Fahrenheit) fever. These normal reactions should last no more than 24 hours.

If your child experiences any of the following less common symptoms, call your family doctor immediately:

- constant, inconsolable crying for more than three hours;
- excessive sleepiness or has difficulty waking up;
- limpness or pale skin tone;
- a temperature of 102 degrees Fahrenheit or higher; or
- a convulsion.

While these serious side effects can be frightening, there is less than a one percent chance your child will have any of them.

Possible MMR side effects:
With the MMR vaccine, children may have the following reactions, which begin seven to 10 days following the shot:

- mild rash;
- slight swelling of the lymph nodes in the neck;
- low-grade fever; or
- sleepiness.

Possible Hepatitis B side effects:
Hepatitis B vaccine usually has no side effects. Occasionally, a child may have a low-grade fever, and warmth, soreness and swelling at the site of the shot.

ANY TIPS FOR MAKING SHOTS EASIER FOR MY CHILD?

- **Tell your child ahead of time** what's going to happen. Explain that the shots are "to keep you safe and healthy."
- **Consider distracting your child** at the moment of the shot. Sometimes a funny face or silly remark will keep your child laughing until the needle is out.
- **Try not to cringe.** Your child will notice if you show your concern and fear. Remind yourself that the shot is important to your child's health.
- **Plan some fun activities** after the shot. Cheer up your child with a trip to the toy store, a restaurant, or playground.

CALIFORNIA REQUIREMENTS FOR SCHOOL ENTRY

The California School Immunization Law requires that children be up-to-date on their immunizations to attend school or childcare. Shots that are required: Polio, DTP/DTaP/DT/Td3, MMR, Hepatitis B, Hib, and Varicella. Check with your doctor to determine how many doses are needed. Review your child's immunization record to make sure you have a date for each required shot.