

This matte article is written for direct insertion in community and weekly newspapers and magazines, or websites that target parents.

To increase the chances that this matte article will be picked up for publication, localize the story by featuring a quote from a state or local spokesperson, using local or state statistics to reinforce your messages and providing details on where people in your community can go for more information or to get their children immunized.

Word count: 489

Vaccinating on Time is Important for Disease Protection



Parents agree that feeding and sleep schedules are important to help keep their children healthy. The same goes for childhood immunizations. Vaccinating children on time is the best way to protect them against 14 serious and potentially deadly diseases before their second birthday.

“The recommended immunization schedule is designed to offer protection early in life,” said Dr. Anne Schuchat, Assistant Surgeon General and Director of the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD),

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), “when babies are vulnerable and before it’s likely they will be exposed to diseases.”

Public health and medical experts base their vaccine recommendations on many factors. They study information about diseases and vaccines very carefully to decide which vaccines kids should get and when they should get them for best protection.

Although the number of vaccines a child needs in the first two years may seem like a lot, doctors know a great deal about the human immune system, and they know that a healthy baby’s immune system can handle getting all vaccines when they are recommended. Dr. Schuchat cautions against parents delaying vaccination. “There is no known benefit to delaying vaccination. In fact, it puts babies at risk of getting sick because they are left vulnerable to catch serious diseases during the time they are not protected by vaccines.”

When parents choose not to vaccinate or to follow a delayed schedule, children are left unprotected against diseases that still circulate in this country, like measles and whooping cough. For example, more than 48,000 cases of whooping cough were reported in the United States in 2012. During this time, 20 deaths have been reported—the majority of these deaths were in children younger than 3 months of age.

As of October 31, 2014, 603 people from 22 states in the U.S. have been reported as having measles. This is the largest number of cases in the U.S. since measles was eliminated in 2000. Staying on track with the immunization schedule ensures that children have the best protection against diseases like these by age two.

Parents who are concerned about the number of shots given at one time can reduce the number given at a visit by using the flexibility built into the recommended immunization schedule. For example, the third dose of

hepatitis B vaccine can be given at 6 through 18 months of age. Parents can work with their child's health care professional to have their child get this dose at any time during that age range.

"I make sure my kids are vaccinated on time," said Dr. Andrew Kroger, medical officer, NCIRD, and father of two. "Getting children all the vaccines they need by age two is one of the best things parents can do to help keep their children safe and healthy."

If you have questions about the childhood immunization schedule, talk with your child's doctor or nurse. For more information about vaccines, go to www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents.

December 2014

This document can be found on the CDC website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niw/>