

Why Illinois Follows the American Academy of Pediatrics Immunization Recommendations

What Families Need to Know

Illinois pediatricians follow the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) immunization recommendations. Over a million doctors, nurses, and others who care for children every day agree with these recommendations.

Vaccines remain among the best tools we have to keep children healthy and active!



Why are there different recommendations?

People have been very confused by changes to CDC vaccine recommendations. These changes were sudden. The normal way recommendations are made was not followed because changes were made without the strong scientific evidence supporting them.

This makes the AAP's recommendations so important to pediatricians. It helps us continue to be able to protect children from 17 harmful diseases.

Can I spread out the vaccines my child gets?

Time without vaccines is time your child remains vulnerable to infections. These preventable infections can be severe, life-threatening, or have lifelong consequences. The timing for each dose of a vaccine is based on:

- When their immune systems respond best
- The earliest time to provide protection
- Considering when a child is at their highest risk for a disease

Can vaccines overwhelm my baby's immune system?

Your child's immune system learns constantly, even in the first months of life. Babies come into germs every day through eating, playing, and exploring.

Vaccines don't overwhelm the immune system. Vaccines teach the body to recognize dangerous germs.

What's the harm in skipping vaccines?

It is hard to know how a disease may impact your child. You wear a seatbelt in a car not because you expect to get into an accident, but in case you do, you'll have some protection. The same goes for getting your child vaccinated. You are making sure your child has some protection from a disease if they get it.



For more information:
bit.ly/aap-iz



Are vaccines required?

The childhood vaccine schedule provides recommendations, not requirements. Some vaccines are required for schools and childcare centers.

Who else benefits when my child gets vaccinated?

When children are vaccinated, diseases spread less easily. When enough people are vaccinated, it protects everyone! This is important for babies who are too young for vaccines, grandparents, and people who are immunocompromised.

Will I pay more or out of pocket for vaccines recommended by the AAP?

No. Public and private insurers should continue to cover AAP recommended vaccines.

Understanding Key Terms

You may have recently heard medical terms like “shared decision-making” or “informed consent” in news about vaccines. These terms have specific meanings in medicine but are also being used in the news or on social media. Here’s what they mean for pediatricians and the families we treat:

“Shared Clinical Decision-Making”

In medicine, shared clinical decision making is how doctors talk to a patient about the different treatment options they have when there is not one clear recommendation. Then, patients take that information to make a decision. We have strong evidence about vaccines and there are strong recommendations.

Labeling immunization recommendations as shared clinical decision making does not actually give parents more options or more freedom. It does make things more confusing. **You, the parent, are and have always been the decision-maker regarding your child’s health care.**

“Informed Consent”

In medicine, this means helping patients understand risks, benefits, and alternatives of a recommended treatment, medication, or procedure. **We will make sure you have factual information about this for immunizations.**

“Patient Autonomy”

Protects your right to make health care decisions for your child. Recommendations aren’t meant to limit your choices. **We will make sure you have the information you need to feel empowered to make your own decision.**

Questions? Talk with your child’s pediatrician about your family’s specific needs.



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