

# Immunizations (Shots) Keep Your Child Healthy



## What Are Immunizations?

Immunizations help keep your baby or child from getting sick. Most immunizations are given as shots, but some, such as rotavirus, are given by mouth. They work by helping the body fight illness. In most cases, the shots will prevent your child from getting serious diseases. If your child does get sick, it will most likely be a much milder case.

## When Should My Child Get Shots?

It is important for your child to get shots at the right time. That's why your child needs to see a doctor for well-care visits. Follow the schedule your doctor gives you. Bring your immunization record (yellow card) with you.

## Are Shots Safe?

Yes. Lots of children get shots each year. Years of testing are needed before a vaccine (immunization) can be approved and used. Shots may sometimes cause mild side effects. The most common is soreness or redness where the shot is given. A low-grade fever can sometimes occur. Anything more serious is rare. Call your doctor if you have concerns about how your child feels after getting shots.

## Do Shots Cause Autism?

No. Autism is a developmental disorder. Studies show that shots do not cause autism. Autism rates are the same in children who get shots as in those who don't. Some people think there is a link between thimerosal (a mercury-based preservative used in some vaccines) and autism. Although this has never been proven, thimerosal has been removed from all routinely given childhood vaccines in the United States.