

# Why Immunize?

## Childhood Immunizations Protect Against Vaccine-Preventable Diseases



Disease	Definition
Diphtheria	A respiratory disease caused by bacteria that can result in breathing and heart problems, coma, paralysis, and death.
Haemophilus Influenzae type b (Hib)	A type of bacteria that can cause pneumonia, meningitis and bloodstream infections. Before a vaccine was available, Hib disease was the most common cause of meningitis in children younger than five.
Hepatitis A	A viral disease which can cause serious liver infections. Hepatitis A is typically spread when a person swallows the virus after contact with objects, food, or drinks contaminated by an infected person. People with hepatitis A can develop jaundice (yellow skin or eyes) and “flu-like” illness, which may require hospitalization.
Hepatitis B	A viral disease which can cause serious liver infections and lead to death. People with chronic hepatitis B can develop liver disease and liver cancer.
Measles	A highly contagious disease that can lead to pneumonia, hearing loss, brain damage, and death. A child who has not had a measles vaccine will most likely get measles if exposed to the disease.
Mumps	A contagious viral disease that can lead to hearing loss, meningitis (swelling of the covering of the brain and spinal cord), and brain damage.
Pertussis (whooping cough)	A highly contagious respiratory disease that can cause pneumonia, seizures, brain damage, and death. Babies with pertussis are often hospitalized.
Pneumococcal	A disease caused by bacteria that can spread through close contact. Children under 2 years of age are at high risk and may develop serious blood infections, pneumonia and meningitis.
Polio (poliomyelitis)	A viral inflammation (swelling) of the spinal cord that can cause permanent paralysis and death with no treatment or cure. Polio no longer exists in the U.S., but does still infect people in other countries. Because of frequent international travel, diseases from other parts of the world (such as polio) are only a plane ride away.
Rotavirus	A viral disease that is easily spread when a person swallows the virus after contact with objects, food or drinks contaminated by an infected person. Symptoms include high fever, vomiting and severe diarrhea, which can lead to dehydration and hospitalization.
Rubella (German measles)	An infectious viral disease. Pregnant women who get rubella can miscarry or have babies with birth defects such as blindness, deafness, heart problems, or developmental delays. Also known as German measles and Three-Day measles.
Tetanus (lockjaw)	A disease that occurs when a tetanus bacteria (typically found in soil) enters the body through a cut or puncture wound. Tetanus attacks the nervous system and can cause spasms and rigidity of some or all of the voluntary muscles, especially the jaw (hence the common name “lockjaw”), face, and neck. Tetanus can lead to breathing problems and often death.
Varicella (chickenpox)	A contagious disease caused by the varicella zoster virus that results in an itchy skin rash with blisters and fever. Varicella can be severe and lead to serious skin infections, pneumonia, and meningitis (swelling of the covering of the brain and spinal cord).

