

Why Vaccinate?

Written by Fallon Magdich-Ritchey NP-C
Hocking Valley Medical Group

Vaccines are products that stimulate our immune system creating protection against disease. When the body is exposed to these vaccines it builds antibodies to the disease. These antibodies are what fight off future exposure to disease. Prior to routine vaccinations diseases like diphtheria claimed more than 10,000 lives a year. Polio paralyzed over 15,000 people a year. Since routine vaccinations started polio has been eradicated in the United States. So, why still vaccinate for a disease that has been eradicated? Unfortunately, polio still exists in other regions of the world, and we must maintain our immunity to prevent recurrence of polio infections in the United States.

Vaccines are given in childhood to protect against 16 different diseases. Infections from these diseases can lead to complications like ear infections, sinus infections, pneumonia, meningitis, and death. Vaccines are available to all children regardless of their insurance coverage, and can be obtained at most doctors' offices and the health department.

Vaccines are also given into adulthood due to decreasing immunity for certain infections. Increasing age also increases susceptibility for illness. Adult vaccines include yearly flu shot, tetanus vaccines every 10 years, HPV up to age 26, Shingles vaccine at age 50 or older, and Pneumonia vaccines at age 65 or older. Your provider or pharmacist may recommend vaccines earlier based on your health history.

Vaccines may also be due if you are traveling to another country. Check with your provider or health department at least one month before you plan to travel.

So why vaccinate? To protect our children, ourselves, others around us, and future generations to come.