






Vaccines: The Basics

Vaccines contain the same germs that cause disease. (For example, measles vaccine contains measles virus, and Hib vaccine contains Hib bacteria.) But they have been either killed or weakened to the point that they don't make you sick. Some vaccines contain only a *part* of the disease germ.

A vaccine stimulates your immune system to produce antibodies, exactly like it would if you were exposed to the disease. After getting vaccinated, you develop immunity to that disease, without having to get the disease first.

This is what makes vaccines such powerful medicine. Unlike most medicines, which treat or cure diseases, vaccines *prevent* them.

For more than the basics, see:

- [Vaccines and Your Child's Immune System](#)
- [How Vaccines Prevent Disease](#)
- [Ensuring Vaccine Safety](#)
- Demos – See in action
 - [How Vaccines Work](#) 
Source: History of Vaccines
 - [Types of Vaccines](#) 
Source: History of Vaccines
 - [How Vaccines are Made](#) 
Source: History of Vaccines
 - [How the Vaccinated Protect the Unvaccinated](#) 
Source: History of Vaccines
- [Ingredients of Vaccines – Fact Sheet](#)
- [List of all vaccines used in United States](#)
- [Photos of vaccines and vaccine-preventable diseases](#)
- [10 Things You Need to Know About Immunizations](#)
- [Vaccine Information Statements](#)
Explain the benefits and risks of a vaccine.
- [Vaccination Schedules](#)
- [History of vaccines: Lesson plans](#) 
Source: History of Vaccines
- [Vaccines for Uninsured Children](#)

See also:

- [List of all vaccine-preventable diseases](#)
- [Who Sets the Immunization Schedule?](#)

Related Pages

[Questions about Vaccines & Diseases they Prevent](#)

[Vaccines: A Safe Choice](#)