

Why we vaccinate

What changed (as of Jan. 6, 2026)

Hepatitis B

- Hep B causes **liver cancer, cirrhosis**, and other chronic conditions.
- Infants can be infected if the mother has Hep B. But infections can also occur later from other household members.
- >90% of babies infected develop chronic infection, and about 1 in 4 of them will face life-threatening liver disease.
- The vaccine is **90-95% effective**. Benefits greatly outweigh risks.

Before: Universal birth dose (≤ 24 hrs old) + series
Now: Recommended for high risk groups and shared clinical decision-making (SCDM)
AAP: Still recommended for all children

Rotavirus

- Rotavirus is one of the most common causes of **severe dehydration** in infants. Before the vaccine, rotavirus caused more than 50,000 hospitalizations in young children each year in the US.
- The vaccine is **85-90% effective** against severe diarrhea, dehydration, and hospitalization. And 70-75% effective against infection. The benefits greatly outweigh risks.

Before: Routine infant series
Now: SCDM only
AAP: Still recommended for all children

Meningococcal

- Disease is rare but devastating. Even with treatment, 10-15% of cases are **fatal**. 20-60% of cases experience **permanent disability**.
- There's some evidence that the meningococcal B vaccines also protect against gonorrhea—an added win for vaccination.
- The vaccine is **70-90% effective**. Benefits greatly outweigh risks.

Before: Routine for adolescents
Now: High risk & SCDM
AAP: Still recommended for all children

HPV (1 dose)

- One of the most effective **cancer-prevention** tools in medicine.
- After the world began vaccinating against HPV, cervical cancer rates dropped because the vaccine is highly protective against the main cancer-causing strains: HPV 16 and 18.
- HPV can also cause head and neck cancer and genital warts.
- The vaccine is **90+%** effective. Benefits greatly outweigh risks.

Before: Two doses, recommended for 9 year-olds
Now: Reduced to one dose, recommended for 11 year-olds
AAP: Still recommended for all children

Flu

- Every year, hundreds of kids in the US die of the flu—last season, there were 280 pediatric deaths, 89% whom were unvaccinated.
- Vaccinating children also helps protect other vulnerable members of the community, like grandparents and less missed school.
- The vaccine is **30-60% effective**. Benefits greatly outweigh risks.

Before: Recommended annually for all ≥ 6 months
Now: SCDM
AAP: Still recommended for all children

RSV monoclonal antibodies

- RSV is the number one reason infants are **hospitalized**. Every year, 58,000-80,000 children under five are hospitalized.
- After recommending RSV antibodies for all kids, data showed that RSV hospitalizations substantially declined.
- Antibodies are **80-90% effective**. Benefits greatly outweigh risks.

Before: Recommended if the mother was not vaccinated in pregnancy or baby is high risk
Now: “High risk,” which is defined as the mother not being vaccinated during pregnancy.
AAP: Still recommended for all children

Your pediatrician can still provide access to these vaccines and monoclonal antibodies at no out-of-pocket cost.