



Dear Parents/Caregivers,

We have been teaching the children about the importance of proper hand washing to help keep germs from making them sick. The children have learned that washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds is the best way to wash off the “glitter germs” that the teachers sprinkled onto their hands.

As a parent, you know that although hand washing helps to stop the spread of germs, vaccines are one of the best ways to help protect your child from serious diseases such as pertussis (also known as whooping cough), and influenza (flu). But did you know that it is also important for you and every member of your family, including grandparents, to keep your own vaccinations up to date?

Two vaccines that are particularly important to discuss with your healthcare provider are the Tdap and flu vaccines.

Pertussis (Whooping Cough)

Whooping cough is a very contagious and serious disease that can be deadly for babies. In recent years, there have been large outbreaks of whooping cough in the United States. There are between 15,000 and 40,000 cases and up to 20 deaths due to whooping cough each year in the U.S. And unfortunately, adults and adolescents often spread whooping cough to vulnerable infants and young children without even knowing they have the disease. In fact, when study researchers were able to identify how a baby got whooping cough, they determined that in most cases, someone in the baby’s household, including parents, siblings, grandparents, and caregivers, got the child sick.

Tdap Vaccine

The Tdap vaccine helps protect older children, teens, and adults against tetanus, diphtheria, and whooping cough.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that all children receive a Tdap vaccine when they are 11-12 years old. Adults 19 years and older should get a Tdap vaccine once if they did not receive it when they were younger. If you are pregnant, it is very important to get a dose of Tdap during the third trimester of your pregnancy. The vaccine, recommended during every pregnancy, will help protect both you and your baby from whooping cough.

Influenza (Flu)

Flu can be serious, particularly for pregnant women, young children, older adults, and those with chronic medical conditions like heart disease, diabetes, and asthma. Even healthy people can get a serious case of flu, leading to hospitalization or even death. During the 2019-2020 season, the flu killed tens of thousands of people, including over 190 children, here in the U.S.

Flu Vaccine

The CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine for all members of your family 6 months of age and older. This includes adult family members such as grandparents, older brothers and sisters, close family friends, and babysitters. Remember, it’s important to get vaccinated against the flu **every year**. It usually takes about two weeks after getting the vaccine for protection to begin. If you are pregnant, getting vaccinated against the flu will help protect both you and your baby. You may hear that the flu vaccine doesn’t work and may think to yourself, “Why should I bother to get vaccinated?” The truth is that even though the flu vaccine varies in how well it works each season, it is still the best protection against flu and it can reduce your family’s risk of flu-related complications, hospitalizations, and even death.

VACCINATE YOUR FAMILY

We understand you may have questions about vaccines, including COVID-19 vaccines that are being developed to prevent the new coronavirus. Visit **VaccinateYourFamily.org** to find answers and to learn about vaccines for your entire family. There you will also find links to the CDC’s recommended vaccination schedules, so you can make sure everyone in the family is up to date with their vaccinations.