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Vaccine-Preventable Diseases

Immunization is one of the most successful public health achievements of the 20th century. Due to systematic vaccination programs, smallpox has been eliminated worldwide, and cases of polio, measles, diphtheria and Hib are at all-time lows. The burden of other diseases has been significantly reduced. Below is a list of the diseases that vaccines prevent in

children and adolescents.

Diphtheria

Diphtheria is a serious bacterial disease that frequently causes heart and nerve problems. Without treatment, 40 to 50 percent of infected persons die, with the highest death rates occurring in the very young and the elderly. [Read more >>](#)

Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)

Prior to the vaccine, Hib meningitis killed 600 children each year, and caused seizures among many survivors as well as permanent deafness, and mental retardation. Since the vaccine's introduction in 1987, the incidence of Hib has declined by 98 percent in the United States. [Read more >>](#)

Hepatitis A

Each year in the United States hepatitis A infection causes 125,000 to 200,000 people to become sick with 70 to 100 resulting deaths. Hepatitis A disease tends to occur in outbreaks sometimes attributed to many people having eaten from the same infected food source or transmission from person to person in family settings. [Read more >>](#)

Hepatitis B

National studies show that about 12.5 million Americans have been infected with hepatitis B virus at some point in their lifetime. Over 10 percent of infected individuals develop chronic infection, increasing chances for chronic liver disease, cirrhosis and liver cancer. [Read more >>](#)

Human Papillomavirus (HPV)

Approximately 20 million Americans are currently infected with HPV, and another 6.2 million people become newly infected each year. At least 50 percent of sexually active men and women acquire genital HPV infection at some point in their lives. [Read more >>](#)

Influenza

Influenza (flu) causes anywhere between 3,000 to 49,000 deaths and 200,000 hospitalizations in the United States. During a "typical" flu season, the majority of deaths resulting from seasonal flu occur in the elderly. However, the highest rates of infection and hospitalization are among young children. [Read more >>](#)

Measles

In the U.S., roughly one in five people who develop measles require hospitalization for one or more complications from the disease. Widespread introduction of vaccine has resulted in a reduction of measles incidence from 894,134 cases in 1941 to 89 cases in 1998, and only 44 cases in 2002. [Read](#)

Learn More

- American Academy of Family Physicians
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American Medical Association
- Autism Science Foundation
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Emory Vaccine Center
- Every Child By Two
- Families Fighting Flu
- The History of Vaccines
- Immunization Action Coalition
- Johns Hopkins Institute of Vaccine Safety
- Meningitis Angels
- National Meningitis Association
- National Network for Immunization Information
- Parents of Kids with Infectious Diseases
- Shot By Shot
- The Vaccine Education Center at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
- Voices for Vaccines

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Meningococcal disease

Meningococcal disease is a serious bacterial illness, and is a leading cause of bacterial meningitis in children two through 18 years old in the United States. About 1,000 - 2,600 people get meningococcal disease each year in the U.S. and 10-15 percent of these people die. [Read more >>](#)

Mumps

Prior to the mumps vaccine, the U.S. suffered approximately 200,000 cases of mumps per year with 20 to 30 deaths. Since a second dose of mumps vaccine was added to the standard childhood MMR series, annual cases are now in the hundreds rather than the thousands. [Read more >>](#)

Pertussis

Also known as whooping cough, pertussis is a highly contagious vaccine-preventable disease that can cause coughing spells that may last for many weeks or even months. It is also the most common vaccine-preventable disease in the U.S. [Read more >>](#)

Pneumococcal

Pneumococcal bacterium is spread by coughing and sneezing. It is the most common cause of pneumonia, inflammation of the coverings of the brain and spinal cord (meningitis), bloodstream infection (sepsis), ear infections and sinus infections (sinusitis) in children under 2 years of age. [Read more >>](#)

Polio

Before the polio vaccine was available, an average of 50,000 polio cases were reported in the U.S. each year. Polio was one of the most dreaded childhood diseases of the 20th century. Thanks to the discovery of the vaccine, polio has been eradicated from the U.S. [Read more >>](#)

Rotavirus

Rotavirus is a disease of the digestive tract caused by any one of three strains of rotavirus. Infection causes acute gastroenteritis (vomiting and diarrhea), and humans of all ages are susceptible to rotavirus infection. [Read more >>](#)

Rubella

Before the rubella vaccine was introduced, widespread outbreaks mostly affected children in the 5-9 year age group. Between 1962 and 1965, rubella infections during pregnancy were estimated to have caused 30,000 still births and 20,000 children to be born impaired or disabled. [Read more >>](#)

Tetanus

Commonly known as lockjaw, tetanus is a severe disease that causes stiffness and spasms of the muscles, with approximately 30 percent of reported cases ending in death. Tetanus bacteria grow in soil and can therefore never be eradicated. [Read more >>](#)

Varicella/Chickenpox

Although generally mild, varicella (chickenpox) is a highly contagious virus that can lead to severe illness with complications such as secondary bacterial infections, severe dehydration, pneumonia, central nervous system irregularities and shingles. [Read more >>](#)