



HEALTH AWARENESS

August 2023

Immunized vs. Vaccinated: What's the Difference?

The terms *immunized* and *vaccinated* are often used interchangeably, but they have different meanings. Vaccination describes the act of receiving a vaccine. Immunization describes the process of becoming immune through vaccination. Those differences may seem minor. Still, using terms correctly can prevent misunderstandings with your healthcare provider.

Basically, getting vaccinated is a deliberate and controlled way to achieve immunization. Through vaccination, you provide your immune system with the information it needs to build immunity without exposing yourself to the full dangers of the actual disease.

When you are immunized, it can be due to having received a vaccine, having had a previous infection, or in some cases, receiving passive immunity through treatments like antibody injections.

WHY SHOULD YOU GET IMMUNIZED?

August is National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM). With the new school year about to start — and flu season right around the corner — it's a great time to remind people in your community that getting all recommended vaccines protects against serious illness.

[Recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) show that childhood vaccination rates decreased during the COVID-19 pandemic — possibly due to disrupted school schedules and concerns about going to the doctor's office for routine well-visits. [Routine vaccination rates for adults and teens](#) also dropped in 2020 and 2021. This is concerning, since we know the best way to stay protected from some viruses is by keeping up with vaccines throughout your life. Getting immunized also costs less than getting treated for the diseases that the shots protect you from.

It is also important to keep a good record, including a list of any reactions to the vaccines. When you enroll your

child in day care or school, you may need to show proof of immunizations. Your child may also need the record later in life for college, employment, or travel.

Traveling to other countries may be another reason to get immunized. Talk with your doctor months before you leave, to see if you need any shots.

VACCINE TIMING AND EFFECTIVENESS

An immunization schedule is a list of recommended vaccines each person should receive according to age. The immunization schedule includes both the vaccines, the number of doses for each, and how far apart each dose should be spaced. In the United States, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention creates the recommended schedules, which are approved by medical organizations such as the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Starting at birth, babies get a lot of vaccinations. That worries some parents. But following the recommended schedule is important. Vaccinations are timed to protect against specific diseases when your child is most at risk.



The CDC's [vaccine schedule](#) has been proven safe and effective at protecting children from common diseases. Not getting vaccinated places a child at serious risk. Unvaccinated children have a much higher chance of severe illness and death from:

- Pertussis (whooping cough)
- Hepatitis B
- Meningococcal meningitis
- Human papillomavirus (HPV)

Some vaccines are also recommended for adults. These vaccines help prevent:

- Shingles
- Pneumonia
- COVID-19
- Influenza
- Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis

FAQ

How do vaccines work?

Vaccines work by introducing antigens from a pathogen (virus or bacteria) into the body. This prompts the immune system to produce antibodies and memory cells that “remember” the pathogen. If the person is exposed to the actual pathogen later, the immune system can quickly respond and fight off the infection.

Are vaccines safe?

Yes, vaccines are safe. They undergo rigorous testing in clinical trials before approval and continuous monitoring after being introduced to the public. Serious side effects are rare, and the benefits of vaccination far outweigh the risks.

What are common vaccine side effects?

Common side effects of vaccines can include mild pain or swelling at the injection site, low-grade fever, and mild fatigue. These reactions are usually short-lived and indicate that the immune system is responding appropriately.

Do vaccines provide lifelong immunity?

Not all vaccines provide lifelong immunity. Some vaccines, like those for tetanus and pertussis, require booster shots throughout a person’s life to maintain immunity. Others, like the measles vaccine, provide long-lasting protection.

Can I delay or skip vaccines?

Delaying or skipping vaccines can put individuals and communities at risk of preventable diseases. It’s important to follow the recommended vaccination schedule to ensure timely protection.

BENEFITS CORNER

The CHP Annual Renewal Meeting is September 7 at 10 a.m. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the 2024 rates, benefit plans, and any other important updates from CHP. This year the meeting is in-person with a virtual Zoom option. We encourage reps to join us at the CTSI Building, 800 N Grant St, Denver, 80203 in the 5th floor board room.

Open enrollment training is still available this fall with your CHP Benefit Administrator. CHP will be providing both virtual and in-person training options to member counties. Please reach out to your CHP Benefit Administrator if you have not already scheduled training.

Plan documents, including new-hire paperwork, are available [online](#). You will need to log in to access CHP documents; you may sign up or reset your password at www.ctsi.org. Please contact us if you need assistance.

