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Vaccinating on Time is Important for Disease Protection

National Infant Immunization Week- April 22-29, 2017

Parents agree that feeding and sleep schedules are important to help keep their children healthy. The same applies to childhood immunizations.

Vaccinating children on time is the best way to protect them against 14 serious and potentially deadly diseases before their second birthday.

"The recommended immunization schedule is designed to protect babies early in life, when they are vulnerable and before it's likely that they will be exposed to diseases," said Dr. Nancy Messonnier, Director of the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Public health and medical experts base their vaccine recommendations on many factors. They study information about diseases and vaccines very carefully to decide which vaccines children should get and when they should get them for best protection.

Although the number of vaccines a child needs in the first two years may seem like a lot, doctors know a great deal about the human immune system, and they know that a healthy baby's immune system can handle getting all vaccines when they are recommended. Dr. Messonnier cautions against parents delaying vaccination. "There is no known benefit to delaying vaccination," Messonnier said. "In fact, it puts babies at risk of getting sick because they are left vulnerable to catch serious diseases during the time they are not protected by vaccines."

When parents choose not to vaccinate, or to follow a delayed schedule, children are left unprotected against diseases that still circulate in this country, like measles and whooping cough. Since 2010, we have seen between 10,000 and 50,000 cases of whooping cough each year in the United States.

"Staying on track with the immunization schedule ensures that children have the best protection against diseases like these by age 2," said Phyllis D. Ellis, Director of Health Oneida County. "Getting children all the vaccines they need by age two is one of the best things parents can do to help keep their children safe and healthy."

If you have questions about the childhood immunization schedule, talk with your child's doctor or nurse. For more information about vaccines, go to www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents.

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