



Vaccines—Safe And Effective Protection Against Deadly Diseases

(NAPSA)—Happy birthday to the 12,000 babies born in the U.S. today. There's an important thing parents can do to keep their little ones happy and healthy: Get them vaccinated on time.

Immunizations prevent dangerous diseases that used to regularly sweep through communities.

Parents should be assured that since vaccines are administered to healthy people, they are among the most rigorously tested and safest medical products on the market. And once they are approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and given to children, vaccines continue to be closely monitored to ensure their ongoing safety.

In addition, the complete childhood immunization schedule has been carefully reviewed and recommended by experts at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP).

Parents may express concern about the number of vaccines given in one visit or the young age at which their children receive their vaccines. "Infants are most vulnerable to deadly diseases," explains Dr. Mark Sawyer, Professor of Clinical Pediatrics and a Pediatric Infectious Disease specialist at the UCSD School of Medicine and Rady Children's Hospital San Diego. "The ages at which people get vaccinated are determined by two things—when they are at most risk for the disease and when their immune system is able to respond to the vaccine." The number of vaccines given to an infant is a "drop in the ocean" compared to what children's immune systems typically encounter and manage every day.

"Parents with questions or concerns about vaccines should talk to their child's doctor," advises Amy Pisani, Executive Director of Every Child By Two: Carter/Bumpers Champions for Immunization (ECBT). "ECBT strongly



Vaccines are essential for keeping children, their families and their communities safe.

believes that parents should follow the recommended immunization schedule. There is no benefit to spreading the vaccines out. By doing so, parents are only increasing the time in which their child remains susceptible to potentially deadly viruses."

Families that choose not to vaccinate or to delay vaccines must be aware of the risk and responsibilities that accompany these choices. For example, they must:

- Alert medical staff at physician offices and hospitals that their child hasn't received all the recommended vaccines in order to ensure that precautions are taken to reduce possible spread of disease.

- Be aware that vaccine-preventable diseases still circulate in the U.S. and elsewhere. If their children are exposed to a vaccine-preventable disease, parents must isolate them to protect infants who are not yet fully vaccinated and individuals with weak immune systems.

- Keep children home from school in the event of a disease outbreak in the community until advised by public health staff/school personnel.

Diseases such as measles, whooping cough and influenza continue to take the lives of children right here in the U.S. Timely vaccination of our nation's children is critical to ensuring their health.

To learn more about vaccines, visit www.VaccinateYourBaby.org.