

Health Awareness

Vaccines Can Help To Keep Diseases From Returning

(NAPSA)—Vaccines help to protect the health of a child who is vaccinated—and those around the child, as well.

That's the word from experts who say the outbreak of measles that began in California and spread to many other states drives home the basic fact that vaccines are the most effective means of preventing infectious diseases. They also believe that vaccines are the best way to ensure that disabling and fatal diseases of the past don't make a comeback in our country.

Measles was declared eliminated from the United States in 2000, but an outbreak that began in Disneyland® in December 2014, and that has sickened more than 100 people, has shone a spotlight on the importance of vaccines in preventing infectious diseases. Most of those infected were unvaccinated.

"All children should receive vaccines to protect their own health and so they don't spread infections to others, especially the most vulnerable, such as pregnant women and babies," says Edward R.B. McCabe, M.D., MPH, March of Dimes chief medical officer. "The more children who are fully immunized, the less the risk of exposure to vaccine-preventable diseases."

He contends that parents should ensure their children get all their vaccinations on schedule, including an annual flu shot. Parents and caregivers should also get a booster for pertussis (whooping cough), a highly contagious and potentially fatal disease in babies, so they won't unknowingly infect the children in their lives—especially newborns, who are too young to get their own immunizations.



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A History Of Support

The March of Dimes has a long history of supporting vaccines. It funded the development of the first safe and effective polio vaccine by Dr. Jonas Salk in 1955, followed by the oral vaccine developed by Dr. Albert Sabin in 1962.

In 1969–1970, the March of Dimes led a nationwide immunization campaign against rubella (German measles). The campaign was so successful that there has not been a case of congenital rubella syndrome in the U.S. in more than 30 years.

Since 2009, the March of Dimes has partnered with Sanofi Pasteur to help inform the public about the burden of infectious disease and the value of vaccines through two unique campaigns: *Sounds of Pertussis®* and *Word of Mom: Celebrating Generations of Healthy Advice*. For more information, visit www.marchofdimes.org/partners/sanofi-pasteur.aspx.

For more information on childhood vaccines, visit www.marchofdimes.org/baby/your-babys-vaccinations.aspx.