

Protecting Children's Health

Immunizing Our Children For A Healthy Future

(NAPSA)—Vaccines are one of the greatest public health achievements of the last century. Thanks to vaccines, the suffering and premature deaths caused by vaccine-preventable diseases have either been eliminated or greatly minimized.

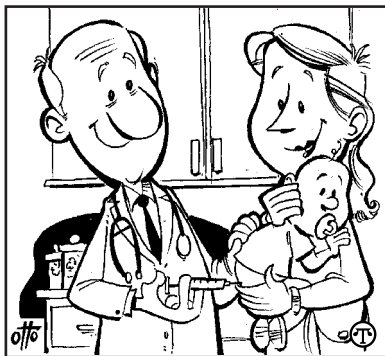
Vaccines play a critical role in protecting the health of our children and our communities. Too many children in the U.S. go without the full benefits of immunization. For these children, the risk of serious illness and death from vaccine-preventable diseases is real.

National Infant Immunization Week, April 13 to 19, and National Immunization Awareness Month in August provide reminders to family, friends, and neighbors about the importance of immunizing our children to ensure that they have a healthy start in life.

Widespread use of vaccines has helped to eliminate polio in the U.S., and measles, mumps, rubella, and meningitis are becoming rare. Newer vaccines are protecting children against chickenpox, hepatitis B, and pneumococcal infections, and vaccines in development could protect children against illnesses such as severe diarrhea.

Other benefits provided by vaccines include:

- Protecting entire communities by reducing the spread of infectious diseases.
- Preventing other infections that can occur in unvaccinated children; for example, measles can lead to pneumonia, which causes



Immunizations are important for the whole community.

60 percent of measles deaths in children.

- Reducing medical costs involved in treating vaccine-preventable diseases.
- Reducing absenteeism and increasing productivity.

There are things you can do to help safeguard the health of your child and every child. Review your child's immunization records. Encourage schools and childcare facilities to review student immunization records at regular intervals. Get involved in promoting the importance of childhood immunizations.

To learn more about childhood immunizations, visit the National Partnership for Immunization at www.partnersforimmunization.org or e-mail questions to npi@hmhb.org. You can also visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Immunization Program Web site at www.cdc.gov/nip.