

Give Your Kids A Boost This Fall: Back-To-School Immunizations A Must

(NAPSA)—Each year, children miss the first day of school because they do not have the immunizations needed to enter a particular grade.

That's why the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and Ronald McDonald House Charities® (RMHC) want to remind parents to immunize their children on schedule as the best protection against dangerous childhood diseases and to avoid missed time at school.

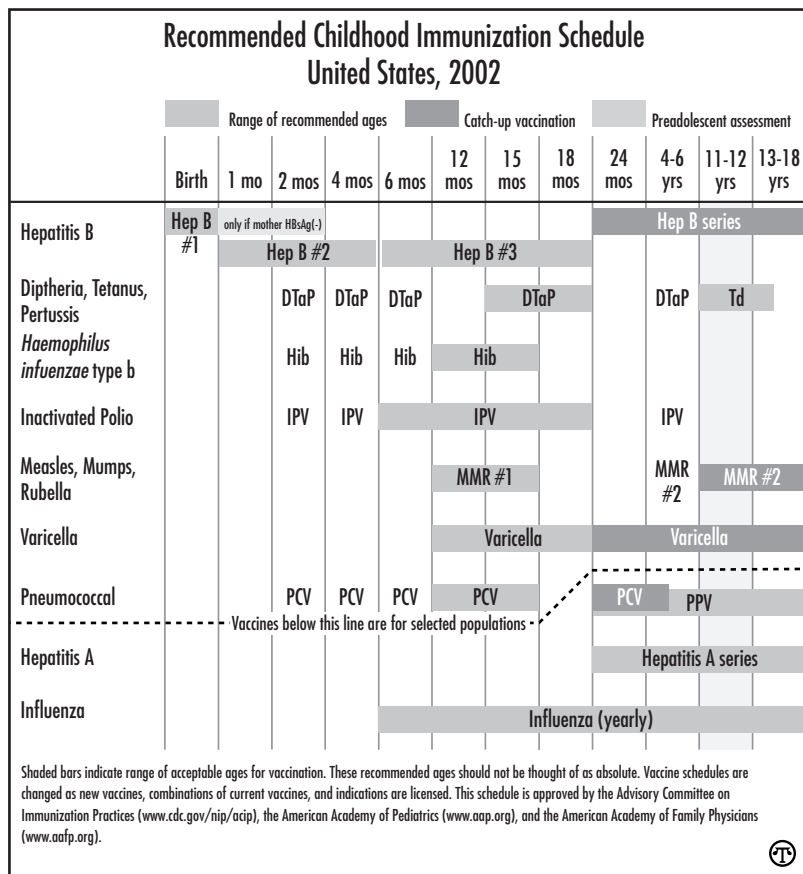
“One of the most important steps a parent can take to maintain their child's health is to immunize them on schedule against deadly, preventable diseases,” says Louis Z. Cooper, MD, FAAP, president of the AAP. “The success of immunizations can make parents think these diseases no longer exist. In reality it's because the vaccines are working that we rarely see a child with measles, for example. Therefore, it's imperative that we never take the importance of proper immunizations for granted.”

According to Dr. Cooper there are three key points parents need to know about immunizing their children:

- By keeping your child up-to-date on recommended immunizations (see attached chart), you not only protect your child but also your family and community against the spread of infectious diseases.

- Vaccines are extremely safe. Like any medicine, vaccines may cause reactions in some children, but they are usually mild.

- Immunizations begin soon after birth and continue throughout life. But because the youngest children are especially vulnerable to infection, most doses of vaccine are given before the age of two.



Students in the United States between the ages of four and six need at least three boosters, including the fourth dose of polio (IPV), the fifth dose of diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis (DTaP) and the second dose of measles, mumps and rubella (MMR). Additional immunizations may be needed between the ages of six and 18 to continue protecting against such diseases as: hepatitis B, tetanus and diphtheria.

Together, the AAP and RMHC have identified immunization education as a priority. RMHC initiatives in this area include: the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile

program, a fleet of mobile pediatric healthcare units that provide cost effective immunizations; a partnership with UNICEF to eliminate maternal and neonatal tetanus in developing countries; and an “Immunize for Healthy Lives” education program.

For more information, please refer to:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) hotline (800) 232-2522 or www.cdc.gov.
- American Academy of Pediatrics Web site at www.aap.org.
- Ronald McDonald House Charities Web site at www.rmhc.org.