



## What are vaccines?

Vaccines are used to boost the immune system. They help the body fight off certain serious infections.

## How do I know what vaccines my baby needs?

A schedule for vaccinations by age is published by the US government. It comes from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or CDC (<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules>). Your health care team is very familiar with this schedule.

## My baby was premature or low birth weight.

### Should the baby be vaccinated?

Preterm babies are at a higher risk for complications from infections. If your baby is medically stable, he or she should be vaccinated on schedule based on date of birth. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends all routine vaccines for premature or low-birth-weight babies.

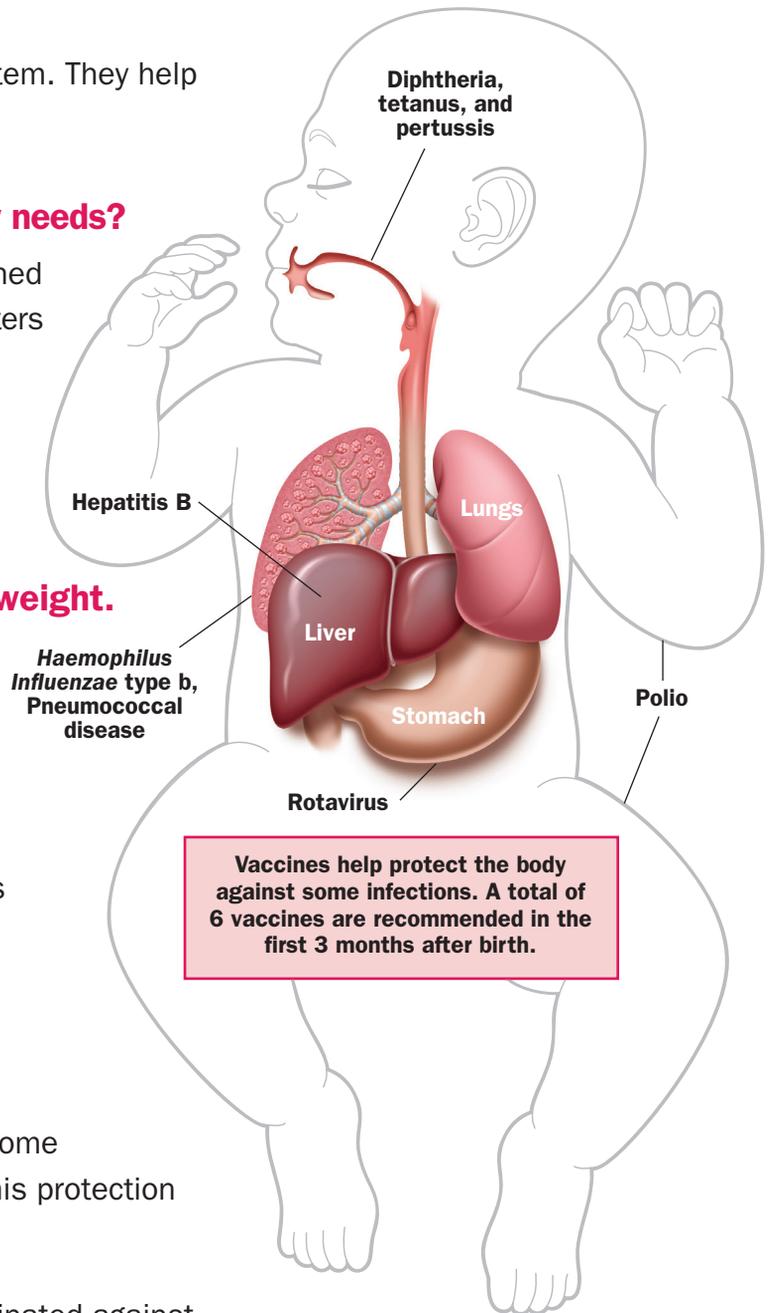
## What vaccines are needed at birth?

For the first few weeks of life, babies have some natural protection from certain infections. This protection is passed from mother to child before birth.

However, many mothers have not been vaccinated against a liver infection called hepatitis B. For that reason, the CDC recommends that all babies receive a hepatitis B vaccination before leaving the hospital.

## What vaccines are needed at 1 month of age?

Many vaccines need to be given more than once for maximum protection against disease. The vaccine for hepatitis B is given 3 times: at birth, between 1 and 2 months of age, and between 6 and 18 months of age. No other vaccines are needed at 1 month of age.



# Understanding Vaccinations (continued)

## What vaccines are needed at 2 months of age?

The CDC recommends that the first dose of 5 additional vaccines be given at 2 months of age. These vaccines help protect against the following diseases:

### **Rotavirus**

- Causes diarrhea, vomiting, fever, and **dehydration**

### **Diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis**

- Diphtheria causes a thick coating to form in the back of the throat. This coating can lead to problems breathing and put extra strain on the heart and may lead to death
- Tetanus is also called lockjaw. It causes painful muscle stiffness throughout the body and may lead to death
- Pertussis is also called whooping cough. It causes severe coughing, which can lead to problems breathing and sleeping

### **Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)**

- Hib infections are a group of diseases caused by bacteria. These infections can include **meningitis**, **epiglottitis**, **pneumonia**, and ear infections
- Hib is completely different from the virus that is commonly called “influenza” or “the flu”

### **Pneumococcal disease**

- There are more than 90 types of pneumococcal bacteria. The vaccine protects against 13 of the most serious types
- Some pneumococcal bacteria can cause **pneumonia**, blood infections, or **meningitis**

### **Polio**

- Polio is a virus that affects the nerves. It can cause partial or full **paralysis**
- Because of vaccination, there has not been a case of polio in the US since 1979. However, polio still exists in other parts of the world, so babies still need to be vaccinated

## Are there any other vaccines that my baby might need?

A few babies with very specific medical conditions may need a vaccine against meningococcal bacteria. These bacteria can cause **meningitis** and **sepsis**. When needed, the first dose of vaccine is given at 6 to 8 weeks.

## What if I still have questions?

Talk to the health care team. They can answer any questions you have about your baby.

## Glossary

**Dehydration** – not enough water in the body

**Epiglottitis** – swelling of the epiglottis, a flap of tissue that stops food or fluid from entering the lungs when swallowing

**Meningitis** – inflammation and swelling of the tissues that cover the brain and spinal cord

**Paralysis** – loss of the ability to move

**Pneumonia** – a serious lung infection

**Sepsis** – a serious reaction to an infection that can affect the entire body

**Ask the health care team when you have questions—they are there to help.**

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