

Safest by Design: How the Recommended Vaccine Schedule Protects Children Best

What is an alternate vaccine schedule?

An alternative vaccine schedule involves administering vaccines at different times or spaced farther apart than recommended by standard guidelines. While some parents may choose an alternate schedule, doing so is not supported by large-scale scientific studies and leaves children vulnerable to serious, preventable illnesses.

How was the recommended schedule created?

The recommended vaccine schedule is the result of multiple decades of scientific research and careful review by experts who examine data on disease patterns, vaccine safety and immune system responses. They use this information to determine what is the safest timing for each vaccine dose and how many doses are needed for optimal protection. Every vaccine is scheduled to protect children when they are most vulnerable. The timing also ensures that the response to the vaccine will be the strongest and most effective. Experts are constantly conducting new studies, examining new information as it becomes available and updating the schedule as necessary. This rigorous process is carefully designed, evidence-based and focused on keeping children healthy.

What are common myths about vaccine timing?

One common myth is that too many vaccines at once can overwhelm a child's immune system. In reality, a child's immune system fights off thousands of germs every day, so the small number of antigens in vaccines are not overwhelming. Another common myth is that delaying or changing the order of vaccines is safer than the recommended schedule. There have been no credible studies to show any added safety benefit and only the recommended schedule has been tested for both safety and efficacy.

What are the risks of delaying vaccines?

Delaying vaccines leaves children unprotected for longer periods of time. Diseases like measles, polio, and whooping cough still exist, and even short delays can put children at risk for catching them, which can result in hospitalization, long-term consequences or even death. Spacing out vaccines means more doctor's appointments and more needle pokes, adding stress for both parents and kids. Often, it results in a child never finishing the full vaccine series - leaving them not fully protected. Research has shown that by 2 years of age, children on alternate vaccine schedules have lower vaccine coverage compared to children on the recommended schedule. Choosing to delay vaccines increases risks without offering any proven benefit.

How can I keep my child safest?

The best way to keep your child as safe as possible, as early as possible, is to follow your pediatrician's recommended schedule. The schedule is carefully designed to give protection at the right time, when your child is most at risk.

Discuss with your child's pediatrician if you have any questions or concerns regarding the vaccine schedule.

