



Learning to Grow

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

CENTER ON THE FAMILY ♥ UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Immunize Your Child against Common Childhood Diseases

Some diseases commonly experienced by young children can be dangerous, or even deadly. That is why it is so important to have children vaccinated against these diseases. Vaccines help a child's immune system to fight off these diseases; each time a child receives them, his immune system becomes stronger. When a child is fully immunized, not only is he protected, but others in his community are protected as well since there is less likelihood of the diseases being spread from person to person.

Vaccines, like any medication, can have side effects, but most common side effects are mild, such as soreness, redness, or mild fever. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) highly recommends that immunizations against childhood diseases start from birth. See the Center for Disease Control and Prevention Vaccine Information in this month's Community Resources section (page 6).

This newsletter addresses information provided by the CDC on a few common vaccine-preventable diseases in young children, as well as tips on making immunization visits more positive for your child.



In This Newsletter:

To support you in fostering your child's healthy development and school readiness, this newsletter includes:

- ♥ **Age-specific information** and suggestions about activities to do with your infant, toddler, or preschooler,
- ♥ **Featured activities** for each age group,
- ♥ **How This Helps:** a summary of your child's development as a result of doing these activities together,
- ♥ **Community Resources:** for more information, and
- ♥ **Suggested Books:** a list of books to read with your child.

1-3-11/14

Infants

Rotavirus is a virus found mostly in babies and young children; it causes diarrhea, vomiting, fever, and dehydration. Most cases can be treated at home with extra fluids, but occasionally severe dehydration requires hospitalization. Symptoms usually start with a fever, followed by 3–8 days of diarrhea, vomiting, and possible abdominal pain.

The best way to protect your baby from rotavirus is by immunizing him with the rotavirus vaccine. This oral vaccine has reduced the number of babies and young children needing emergency care or hospitalization for rotavirus by about 85%.

The CDC recommends that this vaccine be given three times: at 2, 4, and 6 months of age. Possible side effects from the vaccine are weakness, irritability, and mild, temporary diarrhea or vomiting.



Although the rotavirus vaccine is given orally, some other vaccines will be given by needle. Here are some suggestions of things you can do to comfort your infant before, during, and after his immunizations:

- ♥ Bring along a favorite toy or blanket.
- ♥ Make eye contact, smile, touch soothingly, and talk softly to distract him during the vaccination.
- ♥ After he receives his vaccination, hold or cuddle your child to help comfort him.
- ♥ Placing a cool wet cloth where the shot is can reduce any redness, soreness, or swelling that might occur.



Activity for Infants: *Soothing your infant*

Materials: None

What to Do:

1. Remain calm yourself. Babies pick up on your stress and may become more agitated if you are.
2. Slow down the tempo of your movements and words.
3. Smile and speak softly as you gaze into your baby's eyes.
4. As you cuddle him and give gentle kisses, let him know that you know he's upset but he'll be okay soon.

(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps his development and school readiness.)



Toddlers

Pneumococcal diseases include ear infections, pneumonia, bloodstream infections, and meningitis. Bacteria that cause these diseases are spread through droplets from the nose or mouth of an infected person. They can cause very serious illnesses in young children, often requiring hospitalization. Children should receive the PCV vaccine that protects against pneumococcal disease at 2, 4, and 6 months, with a booster dose given at 12-15 months. Ask your health care practitioner for more information about the vaccine.

Because most vaccines are administered through injections (shots), your toddler may become fearful of visiting the doctor. There are things you can do to lessen your toddler's anxieties and keep his attitude toward doctor visits positive. Here are some suggestions:

- ♥ Reassure your toddler honestly and let him know that getting vaccinated might sting a little, but it will be over quickly.
- ♥ Keep calm. If you are stressed or anxious, your toddler will feel anxious, too.
- ♥ If it's okay with your doctor, allow your toddler to choose the site for injection (left or right arm) to give your child a sense of control.

- ♥ Consider bringing a favorite stuffed animal or a favorite book. Have the doctor examine the stuffed animal first to ease some of the anxiety.
- ♥ Immediately after the shot, give your toddler a hug and praise him for being such a brave, "big" kid.



Activity for Toddlers: *Caring for Teddy*

Materials:

A teddy bear or other stuffed animal

What to Do:

1. Give your toddler simple directions. For example, "Rock teddy in your arms." "Give teddy a kiss." "Hold teddy up in the air." "Tickle teddy on the tummy." "Have teddy wave 'bye-bye'" "Wiggle teddy's toes."
2. Show your child how to do the different actions by demonstrating on him. Then ask him to do them with his stuffed animal.
3. Praise him for taking good care of teddy.

(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps his development and school readiness.)



Preschoolers

Measles is a highly contagious rash illness that has possible complications of pneumonia, inflammation of the brain, ear infections, diarrhea, seizures, and death. Measles is spread through the air by droplets and by direct exposure to mucus from the nose and throat of an infected person.

The first stage of symptoms can include a high fever, runny nose, cough, and conjunctivitis (pink eye). About 2–3 days after the fever starts, a red blotchy flat to slightly raised rash appears and usually lasts for 5–6 days. The rash commonly begins on the head and neck before spreading down to the rest of the body. Fever usually goes away after the rash reaches the feet.

All children should receive 2 doses of the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine at 12–15 months of age then again sometime between 4–6 years of age. Measles vaccination is required for all children before enrollment into any school in Hawai'i. (Some exemptions apply.)

There are things you can do to lessen your preschooler's anxieties and keep his attitude



toward doctor visits positive. Here are some suggestions:

- ♥ Explain the concept of immunization a day or two before the doctor's visit. Be honest about upcoming "shots" and let him know that it helps to protect him from getting sick.
- ♥ Check out a library book about doctor visits. Read the book with your child and emphasize that the doctor and nurse want to keep him from getting sick. Let your child bring this book to the office visit.

Activities for Preschoolers: *Baby Clinic*

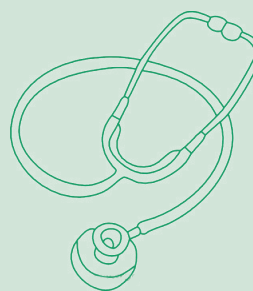
What You Need:

- Pencils and paper
- Tape measure or ruler
- Dolls, teddy bears, and stuffed animals
- Toy doctor's kit (optional)

What to Do:

1. Have your child weigh each baby (doll, bear, or stuffed animal) and measure its' height. To see how tall it is, have him place a ruler or tape measure on the floor next to a wall and lay the baby next to it with the top of its head against the wall. Put a card under the baby's feet and see where it comes to on the ruler or tape measure.
2. Together with your child, record the findings on a piece of paper.
3. If he has a doctor's kit, he could also listen to their chests, look at their tongues, and give them injections.
4. Compare the results and arrange the babies in order of weight and height.

(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps his development and school readiness.)



How This Helps

The activities suggested in this newsletter help promote many different aspects of development:

Physical Development

- ♥ Use body with purpose.
- ♥ Use and strengthen large muscles, e.g., neck, arms, and legs.

Social and Emotional Development

- ♥ Learn to interact with others.
- ♥ Recognize himself as separate from other people.

Language and Literacy Development

- ♥ Connect words and sounds he hears with what he experiences.
- ♥ Build verbal skills and vocabulary.

Cognitive Development

- ♥ Begin to examine characteristics of objects.
- ♥ Develop his creativity and imagination.



Kids in the Kitchen

Cooking teaches valuable lessons. As you do this recipe with your child, show him how to safely handle the items and allow him to do as much as he is capable of. Ask questions throughout the process to encourage his thinking skills. Make sure to wash your hands and your child's hands before preparing any food.

Apple Oatmeal

Adapted from: www.cachampionsforchange.cdph.ca.gov/en/Recipes.php

Ingredients:

- 1¾ cups 100% apple juice
- 1 cup quick cooking oats
- 1 large apple, cored and cut into bite-sized chunks
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ⅛ teaspoon salt (optional)

Instructions:

1. Together with your child, combine all the ingredients in a medium, microwave safe bowl. Use this time to have your child get familiar with food by having him name all of the types of food, or describing what food each looks and taste like.
2. Place the bowl into the microwave uncovered and cook on high for about 2 minutes. Ask your child to make predictions on how the ingredients may change.
3. Stir and talk about how the ingredients look similar or different.
4. Let cool before serving.



Community Resources

Center for Disease Control and Prevention Vaccine Information

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/downloads/parent-ver-sch-0-6yrs.pdf>

Provides up-to-date information on vaccines, vaccine-preventable diseases, and vaccine safety.

Hawai‘i Department of Health

<http://hawaii.gov/health/>

Information on flu shots, health events, and health resources are located on this website. You can also find out the most current health news in Hawai‘i and view and print reader-friendly descriptions of many common medical diseases and viruses.



Suggested Books

Recommended by Hawaii State Public Library www.librarieshawaii.org.

Infants and Toddlers

Knees and Toes, a Rookie Toddler Book by Scholastic

With childhood obesity becoming an issue, make sure that baby gets off to a healthy start by having him eat healthy foods and exercise every day. In this board book, children learn about their bodies through movement.

Will You Take Care of Me? by Margaret Park Bridges

Mommy kangaroo assures baby kangaroo that she will always be there for him, no matter whether baby kangaroo turns into an apple tree, a field of flowers, or a star, among other things. A warm, tender voice makes this a must-read for any child.

Preschoolers

Veggie Soup by Dorothy Donohue

Miss Bun (a bunny) loves to cook, and she invites her friends to a veggie soup party. Each friend brings an ingredient for her soup, which leads to disaster. In the end, Miss Bun has her friends help her make the soup, which is Great Nana’s recipe. The soup is declared “soup-perb!” The recipe is printed on the last page and would be a great cooking activity for you and your child to do together.

Madeline by Ludwig Bemelmans

This classic Caldecott-Honor children’s book tells the story of Madeline, who lives with Miss Clavell and eleven other girls in a Parisian Catholic school. Madeline awakens one night with an attack of appendicitis and is quickly taken by ambulance to the hospital, where she has surgery and is later visited by the other girls. The ending will put a smile on any listener’s face.

Learning to Grow is a project of the Center on the Family at the University of Hawai‘i, College of Tropical Agriculture & Human Resources, with funding from the Hawai‘i Department of Human Services. www.learningtogrowhawaii.org