



March of Dimes Position Statement: Vaccinations and Immunizations

Summary and purpose

Immunization is one of the most successful and cost-effective public health interventions in history. Federal and professional guidelines recommend immunizations to protect against a wide range of viral and bacterial infections whose consequences can include illness, permanent disabilities, and death. March of Dimes supports the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) immunization recommendations along with those of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). The immunization status of a pregnant person can affect both their baby's health and their own. Some diseases can pose a serious risk to the health of a pregnant person and their baby—but these can be prevented with immunizations. In addition, protective antibodies can pass from mom to fetus, which help keep the baby safe until they can receive their own immunizations.

Public participation in immunization programs is critical to their effectiveness. To achieve effective protection, otherwise known as herd or community immunity, immunizations must cover a certain percentage of the population. This stops the disease from spreading and prevents outbreaks from occurring. When immunization levels drop in a population, there can be a resurgence of highly contagious diseases such as pertussis. Pregnant people and infants are more vulnerable to infectious diseases, especially when they're not immunized. This is why March of Dimes supports efforts around immunization access, advocacy, and confidence.

March of Dimes' position

To improve maternal and infant health across the country, March of Dimes supports efforts to ensure that all moms and babies are up to date on all CDC recommended immunizations. To achieve this, March of Dimes supports:

- CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) [recommendations](#) for pregnant people to provide protection for both mom and baby against immunization-preventable diseases, such as influenza, COVID-19, pertussis, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).
- All eligible children and pregnant people complete the full immunization schedules [recommended by the CDC](#).
- School age childhood immunization requirements and elimination of non-medical exemptions to school age child immunization policies.
- Efforts to increase immunization coverage so that pregnant people and children are protected from immunization-preventable diseases and help maintain herd immunity in the community.
- Ensuring that all families, no matter what their insurance status, can receive immunizations without cost sharing. No family should face financial barriers to full immunization.
- Ensuring equitable distribution and access to immunizations.
- Education for healthcare professionals, parents, and the public about the importance of immunizations before, during, and after pregnancy.
- Including pregnant people in clinical immunization trials and research.