

What is a vaccine?

A vaccine is a small shot that feels like a poke or pinch. Other forms of vaccines include: oral or nasal. It protects the body from harmful viruses or bacteria. Vaccines are made out of small pieces or weakened versions of viruses or bacteria. This allows the immune system to fight against them. Over time, some vaccine's protection can decrease. Booster shots help build up that protection. They remind and train the body to use its natural defenses.



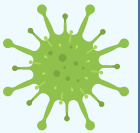
How do vaccines work?

The signs that a vaccine is working: tiredness, achiness, and fever. These are signs that your immune system is making memories.

1 A vaccine introduces a weak part of a germ into the body. This is known as an “antigen”.



2 Once it is inside the body, the immune system is alerted. Then, the body trains itself to remember and fight the germ.



3 The body is ready when it is exposed to a real virus or bacteria in the future. It will protect the body's health.



Protect yourself and others from illness.

Steps you can take

- Talk with a healthcare provider to make sure you are up to date on vaccines.
- Review the vaccine schedule to become familiar with the immunizations recommended for you and when you should get them.
- Visit [VaccineFinder.org](https://www.vaccinefinder.org) to locate pharmacies with vaccines near you.
- Talk to your friends and family about the benefits of getting vaccinated.

Key times for prevention

All of the prevention strategies described can be helpful to reduce risk of illness.

Vaccinations can be especially helpful when:

- Respiratory viruses are causing a lot of illness in your community.
- You or the people around you were recently exposed to a respiratory virus, are sick, or are recovering.
- You or the people around you are at risk for severe illness.