

We all want our children to be healthy and safe, so we take many steps throughout their lives to protect them. These steps may include using car seats, installing safety gates, or taking them to a well-child visit for vaccines that protect them against illnesses caused by infectious diseases.

These vaccines work to protect your child against serious diseases by stimulating the immune system to create antibodies against them. Then when disease germs are introduced, the immune system recognizes them and responds by making antibodies that will destroy them before they cause any illness. This protection is called "immunity".



**Immunizations can save your child's life.** In the 1890's, people would have seven or eight children but only half of them would survive childhood. Many of the disease that killed those children are now prevented by vaccination.

**Vaccinations are very safe and effective.** Vaccines are researched extensively for an average of 15 years before being approved for use by the Federal Drug Administration, and safety continues to be monitored as long as a vaccine is in use.

Vaccine side effects are almost always mild, such as redness or swelling at the injection site. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that the risk of a serious allergic reaction from any vaccine is one in 1 million doses. The disease-prevention benefits of getting vaccinated are much greater than the possible side effects for almost all children.

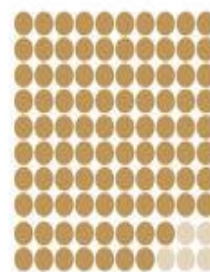
**Immunization protects those you care about.**

Children in the U.S. still get vaccine-preventable diseases. In fact, in the past few years, there has been a resurgence of measles and whooping cough (pertussis) cases. Most of those involved families who chose not to have their children vaccinated for non-medical reasons.

Specifically, in Minnesota, there were 1,247 confirmed cases of Pertussis in 2016 (29 of them were in St Louis County) and there are 502 confirmed cases so far in 2017. There has also been a Measles outbreak earlier this summer in Minnesota with 79 confirmed cases, 21 of those needing to be hospitalized. (Minnesota Department of Health)

Vaccination not only keeps your family safe, but it helps prevent the spread of disease to others. This concept is called "herd immunity". When 90-95% of a community is protected, then it is nearly impossible for any disease to develop into an epidemic.

## Importance of vaccination



Need  
**95%**  
vaccinated to  
protect everyone

**Immunization protects future generations.** Vaccines have reduced or eliminated many diseases that people suffered from just a few generations ago. Smallpox is one example. By 1972, because of the widespread vaccination effort, the threat of small pox was eliminated and the smallpox vaccination was no longer needed. If we continue to protect our children with vaccinations today, the parents of tomorrow may not have to worry about those diseases in the future.



Getting your child vaccinated is an important decision. Unfortunately, there's a lot of confusing and conflicting information out there. Don't base health decisions for your child on one research study or social media-post. Talk to your child's doctor about any concerns you have. Make an informed decision. It will impact ALL children.

*"Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you..." 3 John 2*

For more information, go on-line to the Immunization Action Coalition at [www.immunize.org](http://www.immunize.org), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at [www.cdc.gov/vaccines](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines), the American Academy of Pediatrics at [www.aap.org/immunization](http://www.aap.org/immunization), the National Network for Immunization Information at [www.nnii.org](http://www.nnii.org), or the Vaccine Education Center at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia at [www.vaccine.chop.edu](http://www.vaccine.chop.edu).

Please feel free to stop by the Parish Nurse office to visit, I would be happy to share my resources with you.

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