



## **Doctor: Don't Skip Vaccines Before School Starts**

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Dr. Celina Carrillo is concerned that some parents are not having their children vaccinated for school.

"To start school, the child has to have proof of immunization, but parents can get an exemption from the public health department," said Carrillo, a pediatrician with Advanced Pediatrics of Boca with privileges at West Boca Medical Center. "They are asking for a religious exemption, and you go back to school and poor little Johnny can catch whatever these kids are bringing in."

### **What are parents afraid of, and what can you do about it?**

It's up to the pediatrician to educate the parents. I start with prenatal visits and explain to them with evidence-based medicine why I'm comfortable vaccinating my own children. You can't get autism from vaccinations.

People resort to Dr. Google [the Internet]. It has done the medical community a huge disservice, and anecdotal blogs scare parents. They don't see these diseases anymore, so they stop vaccinating and the diseases are coming back, especially measles and whooping cough.

Our parents and grandparents were afraid of polio and measles, but now people are afraid of the side effects [of vaccines], said Carrillo, who also had privileges at Boca Raton Regional Hospital.

### **What vaccinations do children need to start kindergarten?**

By the time they're 5, they should have the hepatitis B series that begins at birth. They need four polio vaccines beginning at 2 months; four pneumococcal vaccines starting at 2 months; four haemophilus influenza that start at 2 months; five tetanus/diphtheria/whooping cough that start at 2 months; two chicken pox, starting at 1 year and two measles/mumps/rubella starting at 1 year.

### **Isn't that's a lot of vaccinations?**

When I was a kid we got three. But this is how a vaccine works: It's a piece of protein or the virus or bacterium that's injected into the body and causes the memory cells to recognize it as something they've seen before. So, when you're exposed to the actual bug, you don't get sick

from it. These little pieces are called antigens, so when we were children, even though we had less shots the amount of antigens were much higher than now because science has gotten better.

**Do children need any vaccines for middle or high school?**

You need vaccines for the seventh grade, a booster of the tetanus shot. The beautiful part is that shot has whooping cough in it. That has only been in effect for five years. Whooping cough is coming back; adults get it or adolescents get it and pass it on to infants who can die from it. It's the adults who don't do it. Now we're trying to vaccinate the parents, because nobody can remember when their last tetanus shot was, and it only lasts for 10 years.

**Are there any other vaccines you recommend for your patients?**

Not for school, but we highly recommend the meningococcal vaccine. It prevents a horrible form of meningitis, the bad one. We usually give it to 11 or 12 year olds, and they get a booster before college. Also, the human papillomavirus [HPV] vaccine. That also is given at the 11- or 12-year visits for boys and girls to prevent genital warts and cervical cancer. The rotavirus vaccine, an oral vaccine for babies, starts at 2 months to protect them from a gastrointestinal virus. Hepatitis A is a series of two that you start at 1 year and then 18 months. Also, the annual flu vaccine over the age of 6 months.

Parents, here's a link to the [Palm Beach County Health Department's](http://www.pbchd.com/immunz/immunization.htm) school immunizations requirements: [pbchd.com/immunz/immunization.htm](http://www.pbchd.com/immunz/immunization.htm)

<http://www.sun-sentinel.com/news/palm-beach/boca-raton/fl-brf-vaccinations-0803-20110803.0.3145496.story>