

Endorsement of the Vaccination Schedules Recommended by The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)



The [Alliance for Immunization in Michigan](#) (AIM) Coalition is a partnership of public and private sector organizations that focuses on a broad spectrum of immunization issues in Michigan. AIM's mission is to promote immunizations across the lifespan, with an emphasis on provider education.

The [Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices](#) (ACIP) is comprised of 15 medical and public health experts that provide advice and guidance to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) regarding vaccine recommendations. Each year the ACIP publishes recommended vaccination schedules for children, adolescents, and adults.

AIM strongly recommends that health care providers, individuals, and families follow the ACIP-recommended vaccination schedules and avoid “alternative” vaccination schedules, which often delay vaccinations and leave individuals susceptible to serious diseases. Below are some reasons for immunizing according to the ACIP-recommended immunization schedules.

Inadequately Immunized Children, Adolescents, and Adults Are Vulnerable to Contracting Vaccine-Preventable Diseases

- Use of delayed vaccination schedules leave individuals at serious risk of contracting highly contagious, deadly diseases that are only a plane ride away.
- These diseases are less common than 20 years ago due to the tremendous success of our nation's public health [vaccination programs](#) and school entry immunization requirements.
- However, infectious diseases such as measles, pertussis (whooping cough), varicella (chickenpox), influenza, pneumococcal pneumonia, *Haemophilus influenzae type b* (Hib), and meningitis have not disappeared.
 - A total of 995 pertussis cases were reported in Michigan in 2013. This is a 17 percent increase over the 845 cases reported in 2012.
 - In the past decade, the average annual number of measles cases has been around 60. As of June 6, 2014, 397 measles cases were reported in the United States making this the highest year-to-date total in the country since measles elimination in 2000.
- Parents may not be aware of the vulnerability of their child to such infections because they have had little or no direct experience with these diseases.

ACIP Immunization Schedules Are Tested for Safety and Efficacy While Delayed Immunization Schedules Are Not

- ACIP-recommended immunization schedules are studied for [safety](#) and effectiveness, while [“alternative” immunization schedules](#) are not tested and are created based on speculation rather than sound science.
- ACIP reviews each vaccine for the severity of disease, the number of individuals who get the disease if there is no vaccine, how well a vaccine works for people of different ages and the safety and effectiveness of the vaccine when given at specific ages.
- Only vaccines that are licensed by the Food and Drug Administration are recommended. Rigorous studies to demonstrate safety and effectiveness are conducted prior to licensure and vaccines continue to be monitored for safety after they are licensed.
- Protection against vaccine-preventable diseases at the earliest time possible is critical in preventing these diseases.

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Vaccinated Individuals Protect Those Who Can't Be Vaccinated

- When too few individuals are vaccinated, vaccine-preventable diseases will occur in clusters of unvaccinated people as a disease outbreak.
 - These infections will occur regardless of travel to or outside of the United States.
- This type of “community protection” guards against infections in individuals who are too ill to be vaccinated (such as those who have cancer or other serious medical conditions).
 - These individuals are often hospitalized and sometimes even die from vaccine-preventable diseases that could have been prevented if enough individuals had been vaccinated.

Outbreaks of Vaccine-Preventable Diseases Pose a Significant Burden to Families with Unvaccinated Individuals

- Under-immunized children and adolescents may be excluded from attending school for three weeks or longer during a disease outbreak for which they have no immunity against.
- Everyday activities, including work, are significantly impacted by these diseases.
- Public health authorities investigate illnesses and institute measures to contain spread of the infection, including quarantine, if needed.
- Health care professionals provide costly medical care to those who are ill to change the course of the illness and prevent serious complications.

Communicating the Importance of Following the ACIP-Recommended Schedules to Parents and Patients is Critical in Developing Trust

- Health care providers should validate families’ concerns about the safety of immunizations and [inform families](#) on the strong safety track record of vaccines.
 - The risks and medical complications that can occur as a result of not vaccinating or [delaying vaccinations](#) are important to discuss.
 - Even individuals and families that are up-to-date on vaccinations may have questions about vaccine safety.
- The [Michigan Care Improvement Registry \(MCIR\)](#) is a tool offering immediate clinical decision support for practicing health care professionals in assessing the immunization needs of their patients and communities.
- Health care providers should be advocates for immunization, modeling good immunization practices for themselves, their families, and their staff, as well as recommending vaccines to patients of all ages – from infants to the elderly.

For these reasons, AIM recommends that health care personnel, along with the individuals and families they are serving, follow the ACIP-recommended vaccination schedules.