Maintaining Childhood Immunizations During COVID-19 Pandemic



As states develop plans for reopening, there is an opportunity for healthcare providers to ensure their patients are up to date with routine vaccinations. With stay-at-home and shelter-in-place orders limiting movement outside the home, declines in outpatient pediatric visits have resulted in [fewer vaccine doses being administered](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6919e2.htm?s_cid=mm6919e2_w), leaving children at-risk for vaccine-preventable diseases, including measles and whooping cough. Healthcare providers, particularly primary care teams who provide comprehensive care in a medical home, are encouraged to work with families to bring children up to date with their vaccinations as quickly as possible. Primary care practices in communities affected by COVID-19 should continue to use [strategies to separate well visits from sick visitsexternal icon](https://services.aap.org/en/pages/covid-19-clinical-guidance-q-a/). Examples could include:

* Scheduling sick visits and well child care visits during different times of the day
* Reducing [crowding in waiting rooms](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ambulatory-care-settings.html), by asking patients to remain outside (e.g., stay in their vehicles, if applicable) until they are called into the facility for their appointment, or setting up triage booths to screen patients safely
* Collaborating with healthcare providers in the community to identify separate locations for providing well visits for children

Healthcare providers should identify children who have missed well-child visits and/or recommended vaccinations and contact them to schedule in person appointments, starting with newborns, infants up to 24 months, young children and extending through adolescence. State-based immunization information systems and electronic health records may be able to support this work. Providers also can assure parents about the safety protocols already implemented in their offices. CDC will continue to provide guidance as new information becomes available.