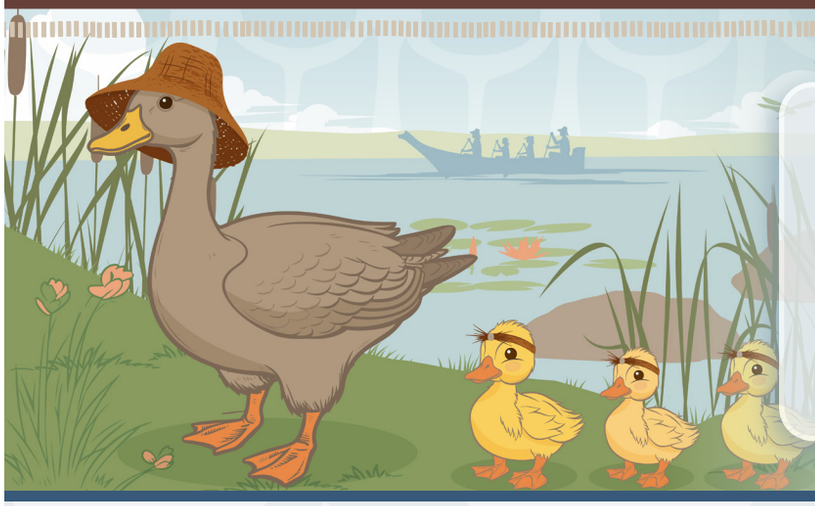
Vaccines 101 for Parents and Caregivers



Vaccines protect us from serious, often deadly, diseases - like whooping cough, measles, and certain types of cancer. This handout explains basic information about vaccines, so you can keep your child and your community healthy.

How Vaccines Work

Vaccines teach our warrior cells – or antibodies – how to see and fight diseases. That's how vaccines protect kids.

Vaccines are Effective

Vaccines keep us healthy. For example, kids 9-11 years old who get 2 HPV vaccines are about 99% *less likely* to get certain cancers.

Vaccine Ingredients

Vaccines contain natural ingredients common in the foods we eat, like sugars and proteins. After they teach your warrior cells how to fight disease they leave the body.

Serious reactions to vaccines are extremely rare. People are more likely to get hit by lightning than have a severe allergic reaction to *any* vaccine.

Vaccines are Safe

Part of the reason we know vaccines are safe for everyone – including our kids - is because vaccines go through many safety tests before being approved. During testing, many Native people volunteer to help.

Mild Side Effects

Most vaccines have mild side effects, like fever or muscle aches, that go away in a few days. Mild side effects are a good sign that your child's warrior cells are preparing to see and fight disease.

Community Protection

When kids are vaccinated according to the recommended vaccine schedule, it's less likely that they will get sick. They are also less likely to spread illness to others who are more vulnerable - like Elders, young babies, and people with certain health conditions.

Don't Have Regrets

Mild vaccine side effects, like fever and muscle aches, often go away within 1-2 days. But the serious impacts of getting a harmful disease can last a lifetime. Don't have regrets. Missing or delaying vaccines only puts your child – and others – at risk.

Check In

Talk with your health provider about what vaccines your child needs and when.

Sometimes people confuse mild vaccine side effects with "getting sick with the disease." This is not accurate. Vaccines don't make you sick with the disease you are getting vaccinated against. Getting sick with a serious disease can have life-long impacts.

Learn More

Visit Native Boost for accurate childhood vaccine info that's fact checked by trusted Elders, Native health professionals, and staff from Tribal organizations across the nation. IndianCountryECHO.org/Native-Boost

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