



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Keep Your Guard Up

National Infant Immunization Week — April 21–28, 2012

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[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

Vaccination rates in the US have been at or near record highs for several years, and studies indicate that most parents are confident about the safety and effectiveness of vaccines. However, recent cases of vaccine-preventable diseases indicate that we can't let our guard down.

Dr. Lance Rodewald is a pediatrician with CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases. He's joining us today to discuss the importance of having children vaccinated. Welcome to the show, Lance.

[Dr. Rodewald] Thank you. It's good to be here.

[Dr. Gaynes] Lance, why are childhood vaccinations so important?

[Dr. Rodewald] Well, vaccination is the safest way that parents can protect their children from vaccine-preventable diseases. There are 14 diseases that are preventable through vaccination before the second year of life. Each of these diseases is a real threat to children. Either there's a virus that's circulates or a bacteria that circulates or the disease is only a plane ride away. Routine vaccination in the US prevents 42,000 deaths every year and over 20 million cases of vaccine-preventable disease.

[Dr. Gaynes] When should children begin receiving vaccines?

[Dr. Rodewald] We like to see children get protected from vaccine-preventable diseases as early as possible. The first dose of vaccine is given at birth, Hepatitis B vaccine. Followed by vaccinations at two months, four months, six months, and 12 months of age.

[Dr. Gaynes] Even after getting fully vaccinated, are children still at risk?

[Dr. Rodewald] Children are not, in general, at risk for the diseases that they've been vaccinated against, however, vaccines are not perfect and it is possible to get the disease for which a child has been vaccinated. When that happens, and it's unusual, the disease tends to be much milder.

[Dr. Gaynes] Lance, how can parents find out about new vaccines or any changes in the recommendations?

[Dr. Rodewald] The immunization schedule is very complicated and, in fact, it changes every year as new information about diseases and vaccines is known. The best place that parents can get information about vaccines and the diseases that they prevent, is through their health care provider.

[Dr. Gaynes] Should parents be concerned about vaccine safety?

[Dr. Rodewald] The vaccines we use in the United States are very safe. They're extensively tested before they're recommended for widespread use and, even when they are in widespread use, they're monitored continuously for vaccine side effects.

[Dr. Gaynes] Lance, where can listeners get more information about childhood vaccinations?

[Dr. Rodewald] Our website has information at www.cdc.gov/vaccines.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Lance. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Lance Rodewald about the importance of childhood vaccinations.

Parents, talk to your child's health care provider to make sure they stay up-to-date on their vaccines.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.