



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Immunize - On Time, Every Time

National Infant Immunization Week — April 23–30, 2011

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[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC — safer, healthier people.

[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.

Immunization has a huge impact on improving children's health over the past century. Today, children can be protected against 14 potentially deadly and debilitating diseases by the time they're two years old.

Dr. Anne Schuchat is Assistant Surgeon General and Director of CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases. She's joining us today to discuss the importance of childhood vaccinations. Welcome to the show, Anne.

[Dr. Schuchat] Thank you.

[Dr. Gaynes] Anne, why are vaccines important to babies and children?

[Dr. Schuchat] Babies and children are very vulnerable to infectious diseases and immunizations are the best way to keep your child healthy and safe. If you took all the babies born this year and vaccinated them with the childhood vaccines, you can prevent 42,000 deaths and 20 million illnesses and we could save 13.6 billion dollars in medical costs.

[Dr. Gaynes] Why do we still need to vaccinate children in this country?

[Dr. Schuchat] Even though we have high immunization rates and record low diseases, these diseases are still present in many countries around the world. We're having record numbers of importations of measles this year in the United States because Europe is seeing record levels of measles. So, even though we do a good job in this country, the diseases are still all around us and vaccination of your children is very important.

[Dr. Gaynes] Why is it important to follow the recommended schedule?

[Dr. Schuchat] The schedule's designed to protect babies as early as possible, when they're at the greatest risk for these diseases.

[Dr. Gaynes] What should a parent do if they fall behind on their children's shots?

[Dr. Schuchat] It's important to contact your health care provider. They can get you caught up by following our recommended catch-up schedule. It's also important for

parents who are worried about the finances to know that there's a program out there that provides free vaccines for children who don't have insurance or otherwise are financially vulnerable. So ask your doctor about the Vaccines for Children program.

[Dr. Gaynes] Where can listeners get more information about childhood vaccines?

[Dr. Schuchat] Your health care provider is going to be the best source of information about your child, but CDC has information at www.cdc.gov/vaccines.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Anne. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Anne Schuchat about the importance of childhood vaccination.

Remember, CDC recommends that children receive vaccines before they're two years old to protect against 14 serious childhood illnesses. Parents — keep vaccination records and check with your child's health care provider to ensure they're up-to-date.

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, 24/7.