

then ...

- *your child will be left at risk of catching the disease*
- *your child will be a threat to others*
- *your child at times must be kept out of school or child care*

- **Without immunizations your child may have to be excluded at times from school or child care.**

During disease outbreaks, unimmunized children may be excluded from school or child care until the outbreak is over, both for their own protection and for the protection of others. This causes hardship for the child and parent.

what to do . . .

We strongly encourage you to immunize your child, but ultimately the decision is yours. Please discuss any concerns you have with a trusted health care provider or call the immunization coordinator at your local or state health department. Your final decision affects not only the health of your child, but also the rest of your family, the health of your child's friends and their families, classmates, neighbors, and community.

For more information about vaccines, go to:

- Immunization Action Coalition: www.vaccineinformation.org and www.immunize.org
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov/nip
CDC's Immunization Information Hotline: (800) 232-2522 (English) or (800) 232-0233 (Spanish)
- American Academy of Pediatrics: www.cispimmunize.org
- National Network for Immunization Information: www.immunizationinfo.org
- Vaccine Education Center: www.vaccine.chop.edu

Immunization Action Coalition
1573 Selby Avenue, Suite 234
Saint Paul, MN 55104
phone: (651) 647-9009
fax: (651) 647-9131
www.immunize.org
www.vaccineinformation.org

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www.immunize.org/catg.d/p4017.pdf • Item #P4017 (11/03)

What if you don't immunize your child?

What if . . .

What if you don't immunize

your child? While most state

laws provide for religious

or personal exemptions to

required immunizations,

concerned parents should still

consider the consequences of

not immunizing their children.



● Without immunizations your child is at greater risk of catching one of the vaccine-preventable diseases.

Vaccines were developed to protect individuals from dangerous and sometimes deadly diseases. Vaccines are safe and effective, and such diseases are still a threat.

- Pertussis or “whooping cough” is an extremely dangerous disease for infants. It is not easily treated and can result in permanent brain damage or death. During 1997–2000, nearly 30,000 cases of pertussis were reported in the United States, including 62 pertussis-related deaths. Of infected infants younger than age 6 months, two-thirds needed to be hospitalized. In 2002, 9,771 cases and 22 deaths from pertussis were reported—the most cases since 1964.
- Measles is dangerous and very contagious. During the 1989–1991 U.S. measles epidemic, approximately 55,000 cases and 132 deaths (mostly children) were reported. Worldwide, measles kills approximately 745,000 children each year.
- Diphtheria is an infectious disease of the nose and throat that can lead to serious breathing problems, heart failure, paralysis, and even death. In recent years, there have been few cases of diphtheria in the United States. However, the disease has not been

eliminated from the world. A diphtheria epidemic recently occurred in countries of the former Soviet Union, where many children and adults had not been immunized. Their reported cases of diphtheria rose from 839 in 1989 to 47,802 in 1994, when 1,746 persons died. At least 20 infected individuals exported the disease along the way.

- Before the availability of a chickenpox vaccine, almost every child suffered from this disease. During 1988–1995, up to 10,000 people were hospitalized each year from complications of chickenpox—most of them previously healthy children. An average of 43 children died from chickenpox each year during 1990–1994.

● Without immunizations your child can infect others.

Children who are not immunized can transmit vaccine-preventable diseases throughout the community.

- Unvaccinated people can pass diseases on to babies who are too young to be fully immunized.
- Unvaccinated people pose a threat to children and adults who can't be immunized for medical reasons. This includes people with leukemia and other cancers, HIV/AIDS and other immune system problems, and persons receiving chemotherapy, radiation therapy, or large doses of corticosteroids.
- Unvaccinated people can infect the small percentage of children whose immunizations did not “take.”