Since school recently started back, the Splendora ISD School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) realized that this would be a great time to spread information about the importance of immunizations.

Vaccination is one of the best ways parents can protect infants, children and teens from 16 potentially harmful diseases. Vaccine-preventable diseases can be very serious, may require hospitalizations, or even be deadly – especially in infants and young children.

How Vaccines Prevent Diseases

The diseases that vaccines prevent can be dangerous, or even deadly. Vaccines reduce the risk of infection by working with the body's natural defenses to help it safely develop immunity to disease.

When germs, such as bacteria or viruses, invade the body, they attack and multiply. This invasion is called an infection, and the infection is what causes illness. The immune system then has to fight the infection. Once it fights off the infection, the body is left with a supply of cells that help recognize and fight that disease in the future.

Vaccines help develop immunity by imitating an infection, but this "imitation" infection does not cause illness. It does, however, cause the immune system to develop the same response as it does to a real infection so the body can recognize and fight the vaccine-preventable disease in the future. Sometimes, after getting a vaccine, the imitation infection can cause minor symptoms, such as fever. Such minor symptoms are normal and should be expected as the body builds immunity.

Vaccines and Your Child's Immune System

As a parent, you may get upset or concerned when you watch your baby get 3 or 4 shots during a doctor's visit. But, all of those shots add up to your baby being protected against 14 infectious diseases. Young babies can get very ill from vaccine-preventable diseases. The vaccination schedule is designed to protect young
children before they are likely to be exposed to potentially serious diseases and when they are most vulnerable to serious infections.

Although children continue to get several vaccines up to their second birthday, these vaccines do not overload the immune system. Every day, your healthy baby’s immune system successfully fights off millions of antigens—the parts of germs that cause the body’s immune system to respond. The antigens in vaccines come from weakened or killed germs so they cannot cause serious illness. Vaccines contain only a tiny amount of the antigens that your baby encounters every day, even if your child receives several vaccines in one day.

Combination vaccines take two or more vaccines that could be given individually and put them into one shot. Children get the same protection as they do from individual vaccines given separately—but with fewer shots.

**Vaccine Side Effects/Risks**

Like any medication, vaccines, can cause side effects. The most common side effects are mild. On the other hand, many vaccine-preventable disease symptoms can be serious, or even deadly. Even though many of these diseases are rare in this country, they still occur around the world and can be brought into the U.S., putting unvaccinated children at risk.

The side effects associated with getting vaccines are almost always minor (such as redness and swelling where the shot was given) and go away within a few days. If your child experiences a reaction at the injection site, you can use a cool, wet cloth to reduce redness, soreness, and swelling.

Serious side effects following vaccination, such as severe allergic reaction, are very rare and doctors and clinic staff are trained to deal with them. Pay extra attention to your child for a few days after vaccination. If you see something that concerns you, call your child’s doctor.

**Vaccine Ingredients**

Vaccines contain ingredients, called antigens, which cause the body to develop immunity. Vaccines also contain very small amounts of other ingredients—all of which play necessary roles either in making the vaccine, or in ensuring that the vaccine is safe and effective. These types of ingredients are listed below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Ingredient</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preservatives</strong></td>
<td>Thimerosal (only in multi-dose vials of flu vaccine)*</td>
<td>To prevent contamination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adjuvants</strong></td>
<td>Aluminum salts</td>
<td>To help stimulate the body's response to the antigens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stabilizers</strong></td>
<td>Sugars, gelatin</td>
<td>To keep the vaccine potent during transportation and storage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Residual cell culture materials</strong></td>
<td>Egg protein</td>
<td>To grow enough of the virus or bacteria to make the vaccine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Residual inactivating ingredients</strong></td>
<td>Formaldehyde</td>
<td>To kill viruses or inactivate toxins during the manufacturing process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Residual antibiotics</strong></td>
<td>Neomycin</td>
<td>To prevent contamination by bacteria during the vaccine manufacturing process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Today, the only childhood vaccines used routinely in the United States that contain thimerosal (mercury) are flu vaccines in multi-dose vials. These vials have very tiny amounts of thimerosal as a preservative. This is necessary because each time an individual dose is drawn from a multi-dose vial with a new needle and syringe, there is the potential to contaminate the vial with harmful microbes (toxins). There is no evidence that the small amounts of thimerosal in flu vaccines causes any harm, except for minor reactions like redness and swelling at the injection site. Although no evidence suggests that there are safety concerns with thimerosal, vaccine manufacturers have stopped using it as a precautionary measure. Flu vaccines that do not contain thimerosal are available (in single dose vials).
Ensuring Vaccine Safety

The United States' long-standing vaccine safety system ensures that vaccines are as safe as possible. In fact, currently, the United States has the safest, most effective vaccine supply in its history.

Safety monitoring begins with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), who ensures the safety, effectiveness, and availability of vaccines for the United States. Before a vaccine is approved by the FDA for use by the public, results of studies on safety and effectiveness of the vaccine are evaluated by highly trained FDA scientists and doctors. FDA also inspects the sites where vaccines are made to make sure they follow strict manufacturing guidelines.

Although most common side effects of a vaccine are identified in studies before the vaccine is licensed, rare adverse events may not be detected in these studies. Therefore, the U.S. vaccine safety system continuously monitors for possible side effects after a vaccine is licensed. When millions of people receive a vaccine, less common side effects that were not identified earlier may occur.

If a link is found between a possible side effect and a vaccine, public health officials take appropriate action. They will weigh the benefits of the vaccine against its risks to determine if recommendations for using the vaccine should change.

The Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) is a national system used by scientists at FDA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to collect reports of adverse events (possible side effects) that happen after vaccination.

Immunization Schedules for Infants and Children

The recommended immunization schedule is designed to protect infants and children early in life, when they are most vulnerable and before they are exposed to potentially life-threatening diseases.

Check the schedule for the age or age range when each vaccine or series of shots is recommended. Or create a personalized schedule that shows the recommended dates for your child. If your child has missed any shots, work with your child's doctor to determine vaccination
dates for the missed or skipped vaccines. See the doctor with any questions.

For a schedule of vaccines and the diseases they prevent for ages birth to 6 years please click this link to the Center for Disease Control website:
In Spanish: https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/downloads/parent-ver-sch-0-6yrs-sp.pdf

Immunization Schedules for Preteens and Teens

The recommended immunization schedules list the age or age range when each vaccine or series of shots is recommended. If your preteen or teen (age 7 through 18 years old) has missed any shots, check with the doctor about getting back on track.

For a schedule of vaccines and the diseases they prevent for preteens and teens please click this link to the Center for Disease Control website:
In Spanish: https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/who/teens/downloads/parent-version-schedule-7-18yrs-sp.pdf

Immunization Schedules for Adults

You never outgrow the need for vaccines. The specific immunizations you need as an adult are determined by factors such as your age, lifestyle, high-risk conditions, type and locations of travel, and previous immunizations. In addition, due to the reemergence of pertussis, it is recommended that anyone caring for newborns be revaccinated for this disease. This would include grandparents and parents of the child.

For a schedule of vaccines and the diseases they prevent for adults please click the link to the Centers for Disease Control:
In Spanish: https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/downloads/adult/adult-schedule-easy-read-sp.pdf

All information retrieved from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention website:
https://www.cdc.gov/
Vaccine Center Locations and Low Cost Options

1. **CHRISTUS Healthy Living Mobile Clinics**

   Free immunizations for children between 2 months & 18 years and 1) has Medicaid; 2) No insurance or under-insured; 3) Is American Indian/Native American or Alaskan Native; 4) Child must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

   **Schedule at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, 704 Old Montgomery Rd., Conroe, TX-**
   June 21; July 26; August 22; August 23; September 27; October 18; November 29.

   **Schedule EMCID Building, 21575 Hwy 59 N, New Caney, TX 77357-**June 28;
   August 16; August 30; October 25.

   Immunizations begin at 9:30 am and the only the first 50 children are taken for the day.

2. **Texas Children’s Mobile Clinic**

   Offer free vaccines, sports physicals and well checks. For their September schedule please click the link here:

   [https://www.texaschildrens.org/sites/default/files/Superkids%20September%202016.pdf](https://www.texaschildrens.org/sites/default/files/Superkids%20September%202016.pdf)

3. **Ronald McDonald Mobile Care Clinic**

   Offer free vaccines, sports physicals and well checks.

   For their September schedule please click here:

   [https://www.texaschildrens.org/sites/default/files/RMCM%20Schedule%20September%202016.pdf](https://www.texaschildrens.org/sites/default/files/RMCM%20Schedule%20September%202016.pdf)

4. **Department of Health & Human Services Immunizations: Cleveland Office**

   Immunization services for children and adults, TB services for Liberty County all ages.

   Satellite immunization clinic in Liberty 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month at 504 Palmer, Liberty, TX

   **Phone:** 936-334-3203.

   **Hours:** M - Th 7:30 AM - 5:30 PM

   **Fees:** Sliding fee scale according to household size and income
5. University Of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB): RMCH Maternal and Child Health

The clinic provides indigent services for basic medical and neo-natal care to women and children who qualify for such services. The clinic serves approximately 30,000 people per year. Services include prenatal care, family planning, sexually transmitted disease screening and treatment, children’s health services, immunizations, breast and cervical cancer screening.

**Hours:** M-T-W-F 8-5; Th 8-7 pm

**Address:** 701 E Davis St, Conroe, TX 77301

**Phone:** (936) 525-2800

**Target Group:** All women, children

**Fees:** Yes

**Eligibility Requirements:** Birth to age 45 for females; Birth to age 20 for males.

**Accepted Payment:**
Regular MDCD; 3rd party Insurance; County Indigent Health Programs; charity discount if below 200% FPG

**ADA Access:** Yes