



## Call, Don't Cancel

Parents are understandably nervous about taking their children and teens to their doctors' offices right now, during the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, as a result, **childhood vaccination rates are dropping dangerously** according to the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

- Many healthcare providers' offices are **taking special precautions** such as ensuring well children are kept separate from sick children.
- Many providers are limiting the number of people who can accompany a child to their appointment and are taking temperatures of all family members before allowing them into the building.
- Before rescheduling any upcoming childhood vaccination or well visit appointments, call your child's healthcare provider to find out if the appointment can remain as scheduled and what precautions they are taking to keep everyone safe from COVID-19.
- Not all provider offices are equipped to separate sick and well children. If that is the case for your child's provider, ask whether there are plans in place to catch children up on vaccines at a later date, before the school year begins.
- Set a reminder on your calendar to check back in with your child's healthcare provider in one month to see whether their plans to vaccinate have changed. If stay-at-home orders are still in place, you can always move the reminder on your calendar to the next month.
- The Vaccines for Children (VFC) program offers free vaccines to families who cannot afford to pay for their children's vaccines (up to 19 years of age). There may be other costs associated with the vaccination visit such as an administrative fee or co-pay; however, VFC vaccines cannot be denied to an eligible child if the family cannot afford the fee. Use the **Illinois VFC Provider Search** found at: <http://vfc.illinois.gov/search/>

### Vaccinations are still critical during this pandemic.

- It may seem as if outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases are unlikely with current stay-at-home guidance in many states. However, as these restrictions are lifted, people will once again visit stores, gather at parties, and return to schools and daycares.
- 2019 taught us that outbreaks of diseases such as measles, chickenpox and mumps are only held at bay by vaccines.
- **Help us ensure this pandemic is not followed by an increase in cases of vaccine-preventable diseases or a preventable outbreak.**

Adapted from Vaccinate Your Family found at: <https://www.vaccinateyourfamily.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Talking-to-People-about-the-Importance-of-Vaccines-during-COVID-May-2020.pdf>

