

# VACCINES

HealthReach Community Health Centers A nonprofit 501.c.3 organization.

Health Tips for healthy living.

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Sponsored by Sarah Andel, FNP  
Bingham Area Health Center

## Keep 'em safe & healthy with vaccines

**I**t's back to school season and many schools and daycares have vaccine requirements or recommendations. This month we bring you information about vaccines and encourage you to protect your children from serious health problems by having them vaccinated.

### Vaccine Facts

- Vaccines have literally wiped out some diseases in this country. No one currently needs to be vaccinated against smallpox in the US because no one has the disease and so it can not be transmitted.
- Childhood vaccines protect against 15 diseases including polio, diphtheria, chickenpox (varicella), measles, and whooping cough (pertussis).
- Common vaccine side effects are usually mild and may include slight fever and rash or soreness at the injection site. A small amount of discomfort is normal, but if you think you or your child is having a serious reaction seek care immediately. Serious reactions to vaccines are extremely rare.
- Children younger than five are very susceptible to disease because their immune systems are not yet mature, so it is important to immunize your children on time so they can build up the necessary defenses. Your healthcare provider can give you more information about when each vaccine should be given.
- If you're going abroad you should make an appointment to talk with your healthcare provider about travel vaccines 4 to 6 weeks before leaving for your trip. You need a few weeks because it takes time for vaccines to become effective in your body and some vaccines are given in multiple doses or on a certain schedule.
- 36,000 people die from influenza every year, so get your flu shot! The best time to get a flu shot is in October or November.



### Vaccines and Autism

Recently there has been some news coverage of an alleged link between vaccines and autism. Some people claim that there is a link between thimerosal, a preservative used in some vaccines, and autism. Here are the facts:

- Thimerosal is no longer used in vaccines given to infants. Infant vaccines in the US have been free of thimerosal for more than five years.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Institute of Medicine all agree that there is no scientifically supported link between vaccines and autism.

### Vaccines for Children

Check with your primary care provider to determine whether your child is up to date on the immunization recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

#### **12 locations to serve you:**

Bethel Family Health Center – Bethel  
Bingham Area Health Center – Bingham  
Belgrade Regional Health Center – Belgrade  
Lovejoy Health Center – Albion  
Madison Area Health Center – Madison  
Mt. Abram Regional Health Center – Kingfield  
Richmond Area Health Center – Richmond  
Rangeley Family Medicine – Rangeley  
Strong Area Health Center – Strong  
Strong Area Dental Center – Strong  
Sheepscot Valley Health Center – Coopers Mills  
Western Maine Family Health Center – Livermore Falls

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