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## California Immunization Coalition Urges Parents to Keep Infant and Child Immunizations Up-To-Date During Coronavirus Stay At Home Orders

**(SACRAMENTO, CA)** – Until a vaccine is developed and approved for COVID-19, millions are vulnerable to sickness and death. In the meantime, the California Immunization Coalition urges parents and caregivers to stay current on their children’s immunization schedule in order to protect them from debilitating and potentially deadly diseases like measles and pertussis. At the start of World Immunization Week and National Infant Immunization Week (April 24-May 1), we are now more aware than ever of the serious consequences associated with a disease that currently has no immunization to provide protection.

“It is critical to the safety of children, as well as adults, that the recommended childhood immunization schedule is followed,” said Catherine Flores Martin, executive director of the California Immunization Coalition (CIC). “Delaying vaccinations for months can leave children vulnerable to preventable diseases while stay at home orders are in place and after they are lifted.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that childhood vaccines continue to be given, stating “If a practice can provide only limited well child visits, healthcare providers are encouraged to prioritize newborn care and vaccination of infants and young children (through 24 months of age) when possible.”<sup>1</sup>

“The current COVID-19 pandemic has shown us how much loss can be inflicted on our families and communities by an infectious disease when we do not have a vaccine. It is critically important that your child stay up-to-date on their vaccines to have the protection that they provide,” said Eric Ball, MD, Statewide Governing Board Member of the American Academy of Pediatrics, California.

Physicians across the country are undertaking strategies to ensure patient safety during the pandemic such as seeing fewer patients in-person, using telemedicine appointments, and suspending elective procedures.

“Vaccines work best if they’re administered on time, every time,” said Randy Bergen, MD, President of the CIC. “Your family can safely stay up to date on essential vaccines while practicing social distancing and I urge parents and guardians to contact their pediatricians or local health clinics to determine their options during stay at home orders.”

Additionally, while millions of Americans are out of work and struggling financially, it is important to note that no infant or child should be denied a vaccine because of insurance status or ability to pay. The CDC [Vaccines for Children \(VFC\)](#) program offers immunizations at no cost to providers who serve eligible

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/pediatric-hcp.html>

children. Children must meet at least one federal VFC eligibility criteria, including Medicaid eligible, American Indian, or Alaska Native, Uninsured, or Underinsured.<sup>2</sup> Parents can contact their provider or local health department for information.

CIC encourages parents and caregivers to visit the following sites for more information and resources on infant and childhood immunization needs and schedules:

- [The Doctor Is In](#) – When should you see the pediatrician during COVID-19? American Academy of Pediatrics
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – [2020 Childhood Immunization Schedule](#) and [recommendations for clinical preventive services](#)
- [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) – Guidance for pediatric providers

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***About the California Immunization Coalition***

*The California Immunization Coalition (CIC) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit public-private partnership dedicated to achieving and maintaining full immunization protection for all Californians to promote health and prevent serious illness, disability and death. For more information, please visit [immunizeca.org](http://immunizeca.org) and follow CIC on social media @ImmunizeCA.*

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/vfc/parents/ga-detailed.html>