

Back-to-school vaccination checkup

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As schools are getting ready for students to return, it's important for parents to think about their children's back-to-school vaccination checklist.

Dr. Nipunie Rajapakse, who specializes in pediatric infectious diseases

at Mayo Clinic's Children's Center, says that parents should check with their primary health care team to make sure their children's regular vaccinations are up to date before [school](#) starts.

After a summer of fun, kids are returning to the classroom and that means close contact with each other.

"That's really the perfect setup for infections to start to circulate. Getting them vaccinated, making sure that they're up to date on all their routine vaccinations not only helps to protect them, but it helps to protect everyone else that might be in their classroom as well," explains Dr. Rajapakse.

The combined measles-mumps-rubella-varicella (MMRV) [vaccine](#) is among the recommended routine vaccinations.

She says those routine vaccinations help protect against many preventable illnesses, "like tetanus, whooping cough, measles, mumps, rubella and chickenpox."

Vaccines, she says, help the [immune system](#) combat serious infections and limit the risk of serious illness.

"They're a way to train our immune system to recognize these pathogens, so that if you do ever come across them, our immune system already knows how to fight them off," Dr. Rajapakse says.

And early protection through vaccination helps prevent future [illness](#).

"These are all really safe and effective vaccines that help keep our kids safe in the [classroom](#) safe," says Dr. Rajapakse.

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